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VESPER HYMN.

BY GRACE APPLETON.

Soft the vesper chimes are stealing;—
Father, lo! Thy children kneeling
Unto Thee in prayer appealing!

Listen to the soul's petition,
Bending lowly in contrition—
Jesu! grant Divine fruition!

Trembling bring we our confession;—
Daily sin doth make aggression—
Take, O Saviour, full possession!

Feeble, fainting, erring ever,
Fortify each weak endeavor—
Let temptation conquer never!

Strength our feebleness would borrow—
Light from a celestial morrow,
For this earth-born night of sorrow!

Fill our hearts with pure devotion—
Still the grieving soul's emotion—
Guide us safe o'er Life's rough ocean!

Jesu! Saviour! have compassion—
Plead we Thy dear blood and passion—
Our poor lives by Thine refashion!

Let the morning's rosy breaking
Symbolize our future waking,
With Thy ransomed bliss partaking!

THE MUTE SINGER.*

BY ANNA CORA RITCHIE.

CHAPTER V.

THE RUBY RING.

An exhausting exertion that is pleasurable—that calls into play the capabilies of the spirit which, when they rise to the heights of genius, ever clamor for the outburst of action, usually leaves no lasting sense of prostration; and, then, youth has wondrous recuperative powers. Sylvie rose refreshed the next morning, and free from every lingering trace of fever. Madame de la Roche, with trembling solicitude, felt her hands, and counted her pulse, over and over again, but she was forced to admit that the hands were cool and the pulse temperate, and that her daughter never looked so well or so happy.

The frugal breakfast was unusually prolonged that morning. Sylvie seemed serenely joyful, and her father boisterously exultant; while her mistrustful mother looked positively frightened when she caught herself sharing their gaiety.

Monsieur de la Roche would gladly have remained at home all day, to talk over Sylvie's triumph, and lay plans for the future, but he had promised the notary to complete some important copying; and, besides, he longed to inform his patron that he might provide himself immediately with a new assistant, as fortunate circumstances would place his present copyist above the need of pursuing his humble vocation.

After her father had gone forth, Sylvie, instead of clearing away the breakfast, remained seated, contemplating her own hand as it lay upon the table before her.

"What ails you, Sylvie?" inquired the mother; "I fear you are fatigued, after all; you are only just beginning to feel it; that often happens, and the fever may come yet."

"Oh, no danger! Is it not pretty, mother?"

"Pretty? A fever? No, I think not. How wildly you talk! I really believe you are getting lightheaded."

Sylvie laughed and held up her hand.

"I never imagined it would be so pleasant to have a ring on one's finger. But the ring must come off! Though that kind young lady charged me to wear it for her sake, it must be put to a better use."

"What is the child talking about? She certainly *is* delirious. Part with your first token of public approval? Put it to a better use? Surely, you *are* out of your head!"

"The ring must bring back Maitre Beaujeu's violin. That violin is more important to my dear master, than the ring is to me."

"But you do not propose to sell your ring?"

"No, only to exchange it for the violin. I think I know at what pawnbroker's Maitre Beaujeu left his instrument in pledge. I cannot form an estimate of the value of this ring, but it may possibly be worth the seventy francs Maitre Beaujeu raised on his old violin."

"But you cannot get the violin without Maitre Beaujeu's ticket. Don't you know that, simpleton?"

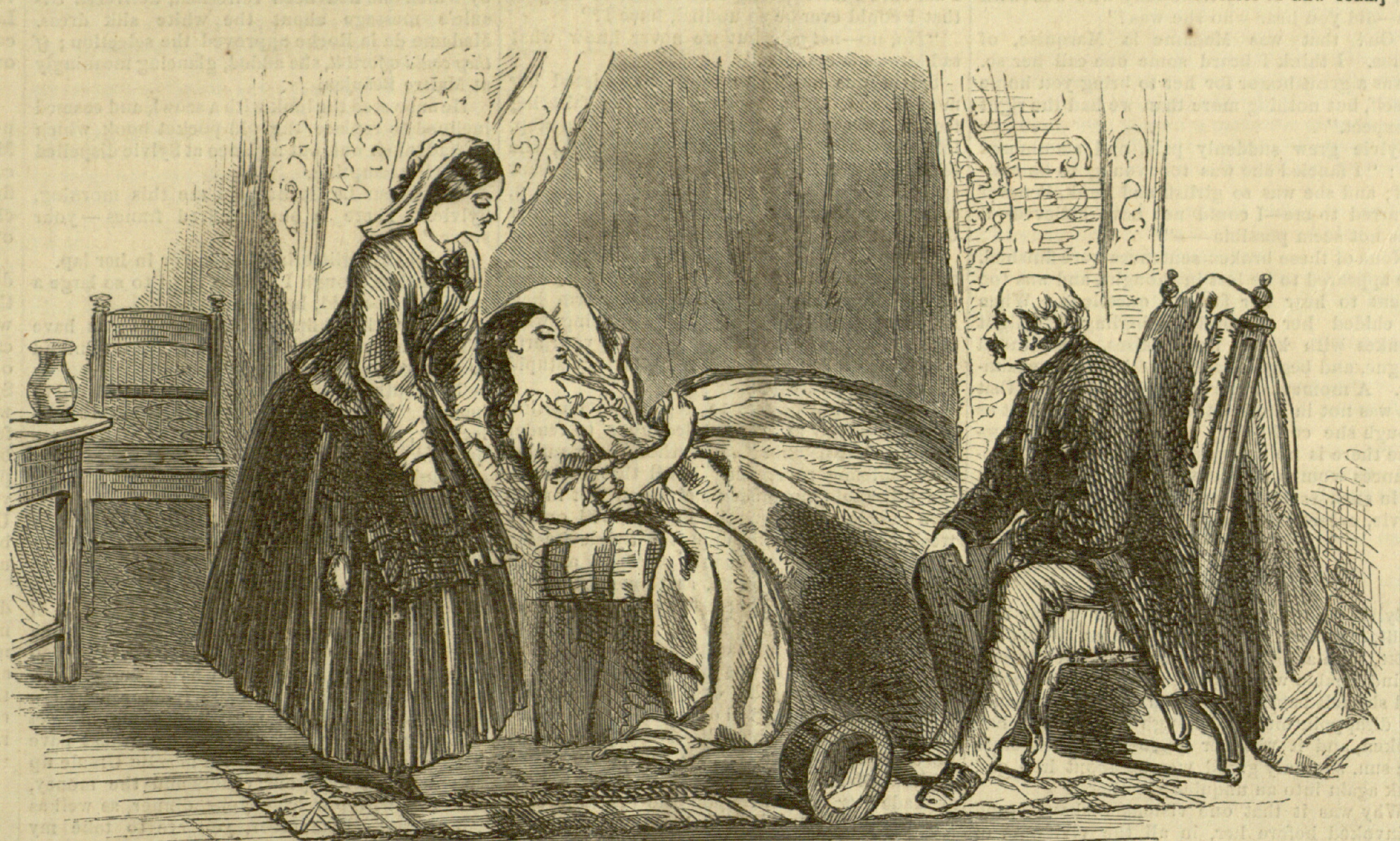
"I suppose the ticket *will* be required of me by the pawnbroker, and Maitre Beaujeu certainly will not give it up for the purpose of making the exchange. But I mean to try what I can do. Do you not remember Maitre Beaujeu said he went to a pawnbroker's near here? Let me go there with Ma'm'selle Ursule. I will tell the whole story to the person who has charge of the business; Ma'm'selle Ursule will testify to the truth of my relation; and I will plead so warmly that possibly I may get the exchange made."

"You will get *nothing* for your pains, but I suppose the only way to satisfy you is to let you try, and I am dreadfully afraid of a fever's coming on, if you should fret. So, go, and try what you can do; but make up your mind not to worry because you are refused a very unreasonable request."

Sylvie quickly availed herself of her mother's permission to make the experiment. Ursule consented to accompany her, and they were soon on their way to the office.

It was sometime before they could get any satisfactory answer to their inquiries; but, at last, the man to whom they applied, admitted that Maitre Beaujeu's violin had been pledged there. Sylvie showed her ring, and cupidity sparkled in his eyes at sight of the magnificent ruby. The ring was not only more valuable than the violin, but an article far more easily disposed of, if it chanced not to be redeemed at the specified time. Sylvie told her story with an earnest simplicity which was full of eloquence; but her listener, though strongly tempted, was unwilling to agree to the unbusiness-like arrangement of giving up the violin without the ticket. Sylvie pleaded with irresistible warmth. A long consultation between the partners ensued; at last the violin was yielded up and the ring left in its place, on condition that Maitre Beaujeu's ticket was returned before night.

[ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1861, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.]



THE WEARY ONE AT REST.

Great was her mother's astonishment when Sylvie entered, carrying the violin, (very much after the fashion that a young girl carries a baby,) and laid it as tenderly on the table as Maitre Beaujeu himself could have done.

She had hardly arranged the room, taken her seat at the piano, and warbled a few notes, when Maitre Beaujeu's knock was heard at the door.

She cried out, "Enter!" without looking round.

"Ah! little owl, up and playing the nightingale again? That's well; that shows you have more stamina than your looks imply. But—what's this?"

He stopped immediately in front of the table.

"What is it? why, your violin, my master," answered Sylvie demurely. "Do you not recognize your old friend? In return for it, will you just be good enough to hand me the ticket the pawnbroker gave you? It's mine."

Maitre Beaujeu was not listening. He had opened the case of the violin—he was looking at the precious instrument; he took it up—he almost hugged it; his breast heaved tumultuously—a sound like the rushing of waves issued from his lips, as he drew the bow across the strings, which responded, as with a voice of their own, to his emotion.

Sylvie stood beside him, too respectful and too much touched, to break the silence.

But her mother, who anticipated an explosion of wrath, exclaimed: "Sylvie did it! I told her she had better not; I told her it was no business of her's, but the wilful girl would have her own way."

"How did she obtain possession of my property? How did she *dare* to meddle with my affairs?" asked Beaujeu, recovering himself, and in his roughest tone. "Those villainous pawnbrokers! How could they have the hardihood to entrust what was mine to another, without my order? I shall go to them at once! I'll teach them a lesson!"

"You will not do anything so wrong, my dear master," answered Sylvie, quietly. "*I* am the only one to blame. Was I not right to repay my debt the very first moment that I could?"

"But you could *not*—that's the difficulty! what means of repaying it had you?"

Sylvie did not reply; she was intimidated by the severity of his look.

"Do you intend to answer me?"

"*You* had a violin—it was *your* sole valuable. I had a *ring*—it was *my* sole valuable. *You* gave up your violin for *me*. *I* gave up my ring for *you*. Surely the barter is a fair one, and simple enough; there's nothing very wonderful about the transaction."

"And do you suppose *that* is the use you are to make of the gifts bestowed upon you by high people? Do you know to what sequences this may lead? Do you know what will be thought of you if you do not wear the token of esteem which a young lady of rank has conferred upon you?"

"I *shall* wear it, Maitre Beaujeu, by and by. I hope to redeem it. Do you forget that a new path is opened to me? thanks to your unwearied instructions; and that I shall be able to earn my bread?"

"How confident we have grown all of a sudden! One swallow does not make a summer. There is a vast difference between one night's triumph and the steady maintaining of your position."

"Ah! there it is!" ruefully responded Madame de la Roche. "I said we were all rejoicing too soon—crowing before dawn. Sylvie's just like her poor father, takes everything for granted, and has found a fortune if she picks up a sou!"

"You almost make me wish she might never find anything that would rob you of the satisfaction of perpetual whining!" snarled Beaujeu.

"Maitre Beaujeu, my mother——" began Sylvie.

"There, there! that's enough about it, child. I am going to give back the violin at once, and to get your ring. I suppose two can play at that game."

Sylvie's countenance changed; she looked not sad merely, but hurt, and answered with a dignity that became her well—

"Of course, you will do as you please, but it will wound me deeply. I have no right to dictate to one who is so vastly my superior. I am your debtor in all senses of the word; but, if you would allow me the pleasure of feeling the first faint foreshadowing touch of an independence which I may hereafter obtain, you will keep your violin and give me the ticket, which I have promised to carry to the man, who, through my representations, gave up the violin against his better judgment."

Beaujeu looked at her steadily for a moment, and if he did not smile, it was because he *would not*; there was a smile lurking in his eyes which he forced away from his hard lips. He took a long pinch of snuff, and replacing the box, drew out a little, old, discolored pocket-book, deliberately selected the ticket, threw it on the table, seized his violin, turned on his heel, and, without a word, left the room.

When Sylvie and Ursule presented themselves again at the pawnbroker's, the sight of the ticket gave evident relief to the person whom Sylvie had argued into an irregular proceeding, which might have entailed unpleasant results. Sylvie now received a ticket for the ruby ring that had been left in pledge, and departed well pleased.

Maitre Beaujeu returned some hours later. Sylvie at once remarked the satisfied air with which he took a seat, laying his violin on his knees, and resting his hands upon the case.

"I have seen Monsieur Le Grand. I had an appointment with him, which I have just kept."

"Yes? I am glad!"

"How do you know there is any cause for gladness?"

"Your eyes told me; they talk faster than your tongue, my master."

"You will oblige me by not consulting my eyes, then; it's not decorous conduct for a young girl. Monsieur Le Grand has offered you an engagement! You don't look in the least astonished!"

"I knew it before."

"That is not possible. How *could* you know it?"

"Your eyes told me *that*, too. They are great tell-tales."

"Do you want to put me into a passion with your impertinence?"

"Sylvie, my dear, *do* behave reasonably. You don't know what might happen if you *did* put Maitre Beaujeu in one of his rages," broke in the mother.

Beaujeu had seated himself with his back to Madame de la Roche, who was sewing, as usual, at the window. He now wheeled abruptly round, so as to face her. He was evidently on the point of giving vent to some violent outburst, but Sylvie laid her hand gently on his arm; the soft touch and her look of entreaty melted him. Without uttering a syllable, but with a great gulp which seemed to swallow down many words, he wheeled round again.

"Monsieur Le Grand has offered us an engagement," remarked Sylvie, by way of taking up the thread of discourse.

"That's right, child; say *us—us!* He *has* offered *us* another appearance," replied Beaujeu, proudly. "He has either thought it time to recognize my ability, or policy has induced him to show me some deference on *your* account. He has requested three songs from you, of my selection, and a solo on the violin from me. The concert, for which he is now making arrangements, is to take place at the *Salle Ste. Cecile*, not at a private house as before."

A light shadow passed over Sylvie's face at the last words. Of what was she thinking? Why would she have preferred to sing again at the Count Castellane's?

"Le Grand has the whole management, including the payment of artists."

"And he proposes to pay us?" asked Sylvie.

"Two hundred francs!" answered Beaujeu, with ill-affected coolness.

"Two hundred francs? That's immense!"

"No, it's very moderate remuneration. But you are a novice, and have yet to earn celebrity. One is paid for *reputation* rather than for positive *talent*. Of the two hundred francs, one hundred will be yours."

"No, no, indeed! That would be unfair. Have you not instructed me for three years? My share must be very small; I will only receive enough to supply the immediate wants of my parents. The rest rightfully belongs to you."

"Am I to expect henceforth to be schooled by you? Are you to set up your judgment on all occasions against mine? I see you have plenty of spirit that will come out, by and by, and play the deuse with us. I tell you I will make what agreement I please, and you will consent to it, whether it please you or displease you. Am I not master, and are you not my pupil? Perhaps you desire to change places? or you would like to have some other master to deal with?"

"Can you think I could so forget what I owe you?"

"The first thing you owe me is *obedience*, and *that's* a debt I advise you to pay. Since we've settled that matter, now let us select the three songs."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND STEP.

The week that intervened between her first and second appearance as a singer, did not pass very smoothly with Sylvie. The constant presence of her volatile father was not merely an interruption to her studies, but his frequent wordy collisions with Beaujeu discomposed her, and kept her choleric master in a state of most distressing excitement.

De la Roche was in such exuberant spirits—he was so confident that Sylvie's talents would speedily realize a large income—that he would shortly be restored to his former position in the social world, and—glorious anticipation! that he would, ere long, actually drive that superb pair of greys which were always careering through his brain, that he grew more reckless and improvident than ever. The few francs per day which he had an opportunity of earning seemed a sum too petty to be considered. To receive them would, he thought, be a positive humiliation; and, in a stately manner, he declined to undertake any further copying for the notary! He now passed the larger portion of his time at home, commenting on his daughter's studies—vociferously applauding her brilliant execution—rallying his wife upon her low spirits—sparring with Maitre Beaujeu, and communicating to every one, who entered, his princely project for the future.

Ursule flitted in and out of the room at brief intervals, always shrinking into some corner, or stealing noiselessly away when Beaujeu made his appearance.

Mathieu, uncured by the musician's rough treatment of his propensity to hearken by stealth to sweet sounds, never passed the door without lingering to listen; and, as Sylvie's voice threw its witching spell around him, he often sank down enthralled, and with his head resting against the door panel, became oblivious of his errand, forgetful of his wants, his cares, his misery, until a well-known step dissolved the enchantment, and put his visions and himself to flight.

Dame Manot, the *concierge*, who, ever since she had seen Sylvie descend from a splendid carriage, had paid great court to the de la Roches, and gossipped about them incessantly, made continual visits to their apartment, accompanied by curious friends.

De la Roche received her with pompous condescension, and amazed the good woman by his florid description of the mode of life he proposed shortly to lead, and his enumeration of the sumptuous adornments of the abode he was busily preparing—*in his imagination*.

Unluckily this troublesome father had made up his mind not to forego the pleasure of witnessing his daughter's next triumph in public, and upon that point he was immovable. He coolly made known his determination to accompany her to the *Salle*. This privilege Beaujeu refused to allow, and even threatened to give up his instructions, and the engagement altogether, if de la Roche persisted in his intention. Then Everard proposed to *buy* a ticket, and if he had possessed, or could have borrowed, the requisite amount, it would have been expended in this purchase, and that while the sweet singer herself almost lacked food. At last, Beaujeu, tired out by these persecutions, procured from Monsieur Le Grand a complimentary admission, which he presented to de la Roche, on condition that he absented himself from his lodgings during the day. The bargain was easily made, and so great was the father's joy at the possession of the ticket, that he may be said to have "worn it next his heart;" and certainly he drew it forth and gazed upon it tenderly hundreds of times, besides exhibiting it to every acquaintance whom he encountered, during the three days that elapsed before it could be used.

The evening came. Sylvie was clad in the simple, snowy raiment she had before worn. She had no means of replacing the white kid gloves, which had been completely ruined by her abundant tears, but the thoughtful Ursule had provided her with another pair, stinting herself for a week after for the pleasure of indulging in this helpful generosity.

Mathieu had not forgotten a meet tribute to the Saint Cecilia of song at whose shrine he worshipped so devoutly; his offering was a bunch of lilies of the valley; and the pure, white bells, drooping among Sylvie's jetty hair, increased, by contrast, the beauty of the flowers, and of the silken tresses upon which they reposed.

Beaujeu artfully advised de la Roche to present himself at the doors of the *Salle* sometime before they opened, that he might secure an advantageous seat;—his real object was to get him out of the way as soon as possible. The *ruse* succeeded admirably; the impatient father acted so promptly upon the hint that, after solitarily pacing up and down before the *Salle Ste. Cecile* for an hour, he headed the long *queue*, which, according to French custom, forms the crowd at an entrance into an orderly double-file—no one person pressing before another who arrived earlier.

De la Roche's effervescent spirits forbade all reticence, and he soon entered into conversation with the persons who surrounded him. After the opening of a few general remarks, he confidentially informed them that he had a daughter who was to sing that night! He dwelt with enthusiasm upon the genius she evinced, and upon her success at the Count Castellane's recent concert; then branched off in his discourse, and favored his listeners with a sketch of his ancestry and his own early history—gave them an account of his wealth and his losses, and finally communicated his conviction that his fortunes were now to be redeemed by the daughter whom they were about to behold.

Wrapped once more in Ursule's foxy, black mantle, and old veil, Sylvie walked with her master to the Salle in the *Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin*.

The little retiring room appropriated to the singers was a rather comfortless apartment, but Sylvie felt more at home there than in the Count's elegant library. Monsieur Le Grand had saluted her and Beaujeu, when they entered, with marked courtesy, and his example was followed by such of the performers as were present at her *débût*.

The arrangements were, of course, different from those in a private house. The musicians only appeared when, according to the order indicated by the programme, it was their turn to sing or to play.

Sylvie was perfectly composed, and apparently absorbed in the duty to be discharged. She sat beside Beaujeu, now and then exchanging a few words with him, until Monsieur Le Grand gave her his hand to lead her forth. It had not occurred to her master that she should be instructed to return the greeting of the audience by an *obeisance*, and she walked directly, though calmly, to the front of the platform, near the piano. There were many persons present who had already heard her sing, and, noisy as was their welcome, it was unnoticed by the young vocalist.

Monsieur Le Grand whispered to her, "You have forgotten to courtesy, Mademoiselle; courtesy, if you please!"

Sylvie looked up in his face with surprise, but, supposing that he meant her to courtesy to him, made a modest reverence.

The quickness with which the audience comprehended this little by-play—divined what Le Grand had whispered, and how the unsophisticated girl had misinterpreted his words, was surprising. A good-humored and very general laugh, mingled with plaudits, resounded from every side; but Sylvie, far from being conscious that she had committed any error, inwardly congratulated herself that she had so quickly acted upon Monsieur Le Grand's hint.

"*O Mio Fernando*," from Donizetti's opera of *La Favorita*, was executed with artistic skill, depth of feeling, and vocal power rarely equalled. One great charm of her singing was the absence of all effort, the flowing forth of the delicious sounds, as though they involuntarily rolled from her lips. The tumultuous burst of delight, which rent the air when the last mellow notes faded into silence, did not seem to reach her ears. From the moment she commenced singing, her countenance wore an abstracted, dreamy look, as though she had risen to some sublimer sphere, and was unaware of all that passed in the region below her.

It was quite useless for Monsieur Le Grand again to suggest the propriety of a courteous acknowledgment; he led her back to the retiring room without a word, and regardless of the uproarious demand for an *encore.*

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* The title of this tale sounds paradoxical, but the reader is solicited not to judge of its appropriateness until after the perusal of the narrative.

“You sang charmingly, Mademoiselle de la Roche,” he then said to her, “but you quite forgot to salute the audience.”

“Salute the audience! Oh! I beg pardon, I did not know that I had anything to do with the audience,” answered the novice.

Those artless words drew forth little gushes of suppressed laughter from her associates of the hour.

“Yes, little stupid,” said Beaujeu, coming to the rescue; “you must courtesy when you appear before them, and courtesy when you retire, but I will not allow courtesying at every demonstration of favor; that is a shocking Italian habit in the worst possible taste, and does not suit your purer style.”

As he spoke he darted spiteful glances at several of the ladies, who were still giggling in their handkerchiefs, and whom he had beheld soliciting fresh rounds of applause by a ready bending of the knee at the faintest sound of approval.

Monsieur Le Grand, who heard, shrugged his shoulders, and converted a spontaneous grimace into a conciliatory smile. He thought it better not to interfere with the eccentric pair. He had remarkable skill in feeling the public's pulse, and knew that Sylvie's very freshness, and unaffected ignorance of forms, added to the potent charm of her marvellous vocalization.

When she appeared again she did not forget the important salutation, and the marked manner in which she courtesied seemed archly to say:

“If I did wrong before, I hope I am atoning.”

Such, too, was the ready interpretation of her action by the spectators, and her perfect transparency increased her fascination. But while she was singing “*Voi che sapete,*” from Mozart's “Figaro,” her recent tutoring was wholly effaced from her mind; and, at the close of the air, she was gravely walking away, when some recollection seemed to strike her. She started, hesitated, came back a step or two, with, “Oh! I forgot!” plainly expressed by her countenance, made her little, untaught, rustic courtesy, and tripped away, followed by a whirlwind of rapturous acclamation.

Even the bombastic Le Grand smiled, almost laughed.

Before Sylvie sang the third time, her master was to execute a solo. Maitre Beaujeu took unusually long to tune his dear, sweet-toned violin; but he would have flown into a rage if any one had dared to hint that he was at all ruffled. When he rose, Sylvie followed him, and begged that she might stand where she could hear. Beaujeu stationed her a few steps from the entrance to the stage, where she was screened from view. But, as the music grew more and more stirring, it seemed to draw her magnetically forth; little by little she unconsciously advanced, bending forward to catch every sound. She did not see the audience—she did not know that anyone saw her—but stood, rapt and statue-like, almost breathlessly listening, while all eyes were rivetted upon her. The hearty tokens of pleasure that echoed on every side, when the strain ended, were awarded as much to the affectionate enthusiasm of the pupil as to the masterly skill of the tutor.

She remained as motionless as one transfixed, until Beaujeu approached her, in making his exit. His surprised “What are you doing here, child?” first made her aware that she was standing in the presence of the crowd. She drew back, aghast, striking in the suddenness of her retreat against Monsieur Le Grand, who chanced to be standing behind her.

He accosted her, laughingly: “Mademoiselle de la Roche, your appreciation of your master does you as much honor as your devotion to your art.”

“*Di tanti palpiti,*” composed for Pasta's glorious contralto voice, had been selected for Sylvie's last effort that night; and, startling as her vocal achievements had been before, *this* was her crowning triumph. Monsieur Le Grand was obliged to consent to the *encore* which was vociferously demanded; and, even after the request had been complied with, found it difficult to quiet and satisfy the enraptured and excited auditors, who appeared determined to hear the air for the third time, and not to allow the performance to proceed, in regular order, until they were gratified.

That Sylvie was able to sustain herself was now an incontestible fact. That she must take rank with the first singers of the day appeared to be a sequence which nothing could now prevent. That Monsieur Le Grand entertained this opinion was evident from his deference towards her, which every moment augmented.

The concert was over. Sylvie and her master had only made a few steps in the street, when her quick eyes distinguished two persons approaching, that made her heart give a great bound. That tiny, graceful, nymph-like figure, and the stately form by its side, had too often risen before her mental vision not to be instantly recognized.

“We are more captivated than ever, Mademoiselle Sylvie. I am sure the great Pasta never sang ‘*Di tanti palpiti*’ more triumphantly,” said Honorine. “You have not forgotten me, I hope?”

Honorine had taken Sylvie's hand—it trembled nervously at the touch; Sylvie was thinking of the ruby ring with a sickening fear that its absence from her finger might be detected. She remembered all Maitre Beaujeu had said about what might be thought of her parting with the ring, and knew she could not defend herself. Despite of the thrill of joy that ran quivering through every vein at this encounter, she was impatient to hasten away, and could not command her voice.

“Those clouds yonder look threatening,” remarked Honorine's escort; “you must allow us to take you home.”

Sylvie made a faint effort to decline this offer, but Beaujeu thought of the likelihood of her taking cold, and the chances that her voice might be affected by hoarseness, and answered promptly:

“You are exceedingly good, Monsieur. We will accept your offer; for a cold would be a terrible calamity just at this moment.”

“It would be indeed,” replied the nobleman, handing Sylvie into the carriage; “one that would fall upon us all.”

Honorine leapt lightly in, and the gentlemen followed. The former chatted merrily to Sylvie as the carriage was on its way to the Rue St. Denis, and the young singer was gradually lured into unembarrassed responses. It was too dark for her to distinguish the faces around her, and that circumstance helped to banish her diffidence. The gentlemen conversed with each other, and the nobleman gave Maitre Beaujeu his opinion of the concert as a whole, and of individual performers, not forgetting the solo on the violin, and proving by his discriminating criticisms, that he was a fine judge of music.

Sylvie had become quite at her ease with her aristocratic companion by the time the carriage stopped. Maitre Beaujeu was nearest to the door; he got out and turned to assist his pupil; but the nobleman sprang down the steps, and courteously handed her out himself; then, without once glancing at the humble locality, reentered the coach.

Dame Manot flew forth at the sound of the wheels, and various lodgers put their heads out of doors and windows, to see if it really was little Sylvie brought home in a grand carriage; and we fear that some of them dreamt dreams that night about renouncing their own humble vocations to turn their attention to music, as the easiest means of rising in the world.

The delighted *concierge* caught Sylvie enthusiastically in her arms; but this familiarity exasperated Maitre Beaujeu, who almost tore her from the good woman's hearty embrace.

As he bade Sylvie good-night at her own door, he ordered her to go to bed at once. The command, however, was not obeyed, for, naturally, she had to relate the occurrences of the evening to her mother and Ursule.

Very soon her father burst upon the trio, and incoherently poured out the history of his adventures. He repeated the flattering remarks he had overheard, the congratulations he had received when it was known that he was Sylvie's father; told of the whispers that flew from one to another, until quite a large circle was cognizant of the fact; and described his efforts to elbow his way through the crowd that he might accompany his daughter home, and his perfectly furious struggles to reach her side, when he saw her enter a superb carriage, which some of the spectators recognized as the equipage of the Marquis de St. Amar.

“The Marquis de St. Amar!” ejaculated Sylvie; “and the lovely little lady who was with him—did you hear who she was?”

“Oh! that was Madame la Marquise, of course. I think I heard some one call her so. It was a great honor for her to bring you home herself, but nothing more than we had the right to expect.”

Sylvie grew suddenly pale, and stammered out: “I fancied she was too young to be married; and she was so girlish and frank, it never occurred to me—I could not have believed—it does not seem possible——”

None of these broken sentences were finished. She appeared to be lost in thought, and was too absent to hear her father's questions. When he chided her jestingly, mingling his light rebukes with kisses and praises, she pleaded fatigue, and begged leave to retire to her chamber. A moment before she had declared that she was not in the least degree tired, and felt as though she could sing all night; but we suppose there is no exception to the rule that pronounces women capricious, since one brought up in such seclusion, and so little indulged as Sylvie, evinced caprice.

CHAPTER VII.

REACTION.

Sylvie tossed restlessly on her couch that night, oppressed by troubled dreams. When she woke, with a start, her thoughts were confused, an indefinable weight pressed upon her spirits, and she felt haunted by a strange, vague sense of disappointment. Though the dawn had broken, and it was her custom to rise before the sun, she only gazed wearily about her, and sank again into an unquiet slumber.

Why was it that one visionary shape stood uninvoked before her, in all the vividness of actual presence? In reality, she had hardly looked into that face, yet she distinctly remembered every feature; the deeply-set, luminous, hazel eyes; the expansive, intellectual brow; the waving, chestnut hair, so fine and soft that it appeared thin, and threatened early baldness; the well-cut nose; the too strongly defined curve of the mouth, which gave an expression of coldness and *hauteur* to the countenance, until the lips parted with a smile;—she recalled, too, how suddenly the frost melted beneath the glowing warmth of that smile, and the entire visage was lighted up with a winning softness, wholly opposite to its dominant character in repose.

Almost all young maidens picture to themselves a *beau-ideal* of manhood, for which, as their journey through life progresses, they zealously search. Sylvie had seen few gentlemen—we might almost say *none;* never before had a word been addressed to her by one whose noble bearing even slightly approached the demeanor of the Marquis de St. Amar. Was it unnatural that her girlish imagination should have found a *beau-ideal* unsought? He was the husband of the fairy-like being whom she only knew as “Honorine;” but what had that to do with Sylvie's admiration? Did she not experience as much, or even more, for his wife? It was the type of man and woman by which she was fascinated. Wherefore should she feel disturbed?

She sprang out of bed, as though in rising she could escape from her own tormenting reflections; she found herself singularly weak; she staggered back, and sank again upon the couch. Her hands were burning, her lips and tongue parched; she longed for a glass of water, yet had not strength to seek it, and would not venture to disturb her mother; or, rather, would not run the risk of exciting those ready fears by which the latter was so easily tantalized.

After suffering for some time in silence, Sylvie made another effort, and began slowly to dress. The very weight of her clothes seemed too great for her to bear; her limbs trembled, and surrounding objects danced and swam before her eyes;—still she forced herself to continue her toilette. The cool water, which she greedily drank, could not quench her thirst; but, after she had dashed a quantity in her face, she felt somewhat refreshed. Nerving herself to conceal her languor, she lifted the old calico curtain, and passed into her mother's room.

It was late, and Madame de la Roche had prepared the breakfast—a duty which always devolved upon Sylvie. The latter tried to speak in a cheerful tone, but was very thankful to her father for monopolizing the conversation; and she was still more grateful when he took up his hat and went forth, without noticing her fagged look and the unusual flush on her cheeks. He was impatient to relate to his quondam employer, the notary, and any other friends whom he could find, the events of the night previous, and to descant upon the brilliant prospects they heralded.

The weary girl, though she longed to lie down again, had too much consideration for her mother to yield to this inclination, and mechanically opened the piano. Her hot hands had no power over the keys; her voice, when she tried to sing, was tremulous, and dark, floating mists passed before her eyes until the very lilies which she had taken from her hair the night before, and placed in the little tin cup that stood on the shelf, above the piano, grew black as she gazed at them.

“Mother,” she said, at last, without turning, and supporting her throbbing head on her hands, “did not Ma'm'selle Ursule say yesterday that it was necessary for me to have another dress before I appeared again in public? Perhaps she is right; and if I sing again soon, as I hope I shall, (a strange foreboding made her shudder and pause, but she rallied,) we had better lose no time. I am a little tired to-day; too tired to sit long at the piano. May I not pay Ma'm'selle Ursule a visit, and talk over this important affair of the dress?”

“Yes, of course; you will have money enough to purchase something handsome; that is, if Maitre Beaujeu pays you, as he promised to do. But are you tired? It quite frightens me to hear you say so?”

“Is it not natural, mother, after my sitting up so late, and going through so much excitement and exertion?”

“There it is! there it is! Excitement and exertion you will never be able to stand! I thought so from the first. I told your father so, but he would not believe me. You will break down, and then it's all over with us!”

“Pray, mother dear, don't put such an idea into my head. You cannot think how the very suggestion troubles me.”

Sylvie could scarcely repress her quick-springing tears. She wept readily, for she had never known trials tinged with bitterness that cannot find relief in the heaven-sent boon of tears. She had never known the despairing anguish that dries up tears. She had never known the hidden grief that teaches us to control our tears, while they drop inwardly, like molten lead upon the scalded heart.

“I am only tired, mother,” she answered, trying to conceal her brimming eyes, “and perhaps it would do me good to talk a little, *gossip a little*, Maitre Beaujeu would say, with Ma'm'selle Ursule. May I go?”

“Yes, yes; though I hope you are not growing vain, and commencing to attach importance to your appearance. If that is the case, the next thing you will be looking down upon us, as many a child who rises above her parents has done before. I confess *that* is a sorrow I am not prepared for.”

“Nor shall you ever have need to be, mother. I am sure I have given you no cause to imagine that I could ever be so unfilial, have I?”

“No, no—*not yet;* but we never know what sad stroke is coming!”

Sylvie was unable to reply, but kissed her mother, and, trying to command her faltering feet, and walk with her usual light, firm step, left the room. In the entry she paused; she felt as if she could go no further. As she leant against the wall, she caught sight of Mathieu, who, probably, had been hovering about her door.

“I am so glad you are there, Mathieu; I feel so tired this morning! I do not want my mother to know how tired—it would alarm her. I am going to refresh myself by chatting with Ma'm'selle Ursule. Will you give me your arm to help me down the stairs? It is very stupid of me to be so weak!”

It would not be easy to depict the emotion of the poor boy at being called upon to render this slight assistance to one whom he regarded with idolizing reverence. Until that moment, the miserable hunchback had never felt in his own person the superiority of manhood over a weaker sex, but as he supported Sylvie he experienced a glow of manly pleasure, and his crippled frame rose erect, as though, through the might of this new sensation, it could cast off its deformity.

They reached the mantua-maker's door; he knocked, and Sylvie was joyfully admitted. The next minute she sank, overpowered, into the arms of the kind-hearted old maid—told her how ill and exhausted she felt—and begged her to do something to strengthen and restore her, without disturbing her mother. Ursule tenderly made her lie down upon the bed, loosened her clothes, then prepared her a cooling drink—talked to her soothingly—bathed her hot temples and burning hands, bound a wet napkin on her brow, and in a very short time saw her fall into a sweet slumber.

“There! she has found the best restorative! Sleep is worth a whole doctor's shop of medicines!” said the sympathizing dressmaker, as she softly took out her work, and sat down to watch her patient.

Sylvie slept for a long time undisturbed, and did not even hear the knock at the door, nor her master's rough voice, exclaiming, “Where's that little run-away? Flown from her cage, I hear above. I suppose she is growing lazy after her triumph, and moreover is going to trouble us with her *airs;* so her wise mother, up stairs, predicts.”

Ursule beckoned him into the room without speaking. She was always rather nervous about addressing him, and merely pointed to the couch.

“Is she ill? do you think she is ill?” gasped Maitre Beaujeu.

“Very feverish, and weak, and worn out, but I trust not ill. She will wake up much better. Her skin is cooler already,” and she gently laid her fingers upon the thin hands that were folded upon Sylvie's bosom.

Maitre Beaujeu bent over her with a tenderness it was not easy to imagine him capable of experiencing. Yet, possibly, there was a dash of selfishness mingling with the compassion and anxiety expressed in his face. If, by the cultivation of her genius, his hand had opened an arena to the child of poverty and misfortune wherein she could win laurels that were golden, and earn fame that was wealth, had she not done the same for him? And now, were the shining gates of this bright future suddenly to close against both because of her lack of strength to keep them open?

“A fragile casket to hold such a gem!” he ejaculated, half to himself, then turning to Ursule, added, “I comprehend why she came down to you. That mother of hers will worry her life out with tiresome fears and predictions; it's cruel! it's abominable!”

They stood for a while in silence. Suddenly Ursule remembered to offer her guest a chair. He took it, and seated himself at the foot of the bed. Ursule resumed her work. Neither could have told how long Sylvie slept, for both had fallen into deep reverie. At last the slumberer stirred—her lips moved as though they were about to sing,—but only one low note escaped them; the sound or the effort awakened her, she opened her large blue eyes and gazed in wonder at her master, then turned to Ursule.

“You have had a good rest, child,” said Beaujeu. “Are you better? Do you feel refreshed?”

“Much better; how good it was of you Ma'm'selle Ursule, and you, my kind master, not to wake me. How late is it?”

“Sometime past noon,” replied Ursule, looking at the shadows upon the wall, by which she could always tell the time in the absence of the luxury of a clock.

“So late! What will my mother think? She will be terribly frightened. I must go back at once.”

She raised herself and slid off the bed; but as her feet touched the ground, the floor, for an instant, seemed floating away from her, and she clutched the bed clothes for support.

“Let me fasten your dress, and smooth your hair,” said Ursule. “There! that will do. Now drink a little more of this lemonade.”

Sylvie drank eagerly, for her thirst was still unslaked.

“I intend to go up with you;” remarked Beaujeu, in a decided tone; “not for a lesson, I will not allow you to sing to-day; you are too weak; but I must talk with you about future plans. I would rather remain here and converse, but your mother will get one of her tantrums unless you make your appearance as soon as possible.”

“Thank you for thinking of her——” began Sylvie.

“No need—it was *you*, and your comfort, I was thinking of; I know what a Pandemonium she can make of her apartment, when she conjures up her blue devils, and gives them possession of the chamber.”

As they were going, Sylvie remembered her errand. “It was about my dress that I came to consult you, Ma'm'selle Ursule. You said I must not wear my white muslin again, just yet. My mother wished me to ask what change you advise.”

“Say that I advise a plain, white silk, which will become you amazingly, and will be very useful hereafter; for with skill and taste, we can transform it into a number of dresses. An over dress of crape, or tulle, or tarlatan, or trimmings of ribbons, or flowers, or velvet, will vary it charmingly. Don't forget that I am ready to accompany you to purchase the dress whenever you choose. It had better be made up at once.”

Sylvie took her master's arm in ascending the stair, but, perceiving how heavily she leaned, he encircled her waist to support her better. She looked up gratefully, and then, with child-like confidence, laid her head softly on his shoulder.

Affection was inexpressibly sweet to her. A single touch of kindness warmed her to the heart's core—strengthened her when she was most weak—gave her new life when vitality seemed exhausted.

As might have been expected, Madame de la Roche was both alarmed and indignant at her daughter's prolonged absence. She was on the eve of going in search of her. Sylvie begged pardon, and, without mentioning the slumber by which she had been refreshed, delivered Ursule's message about the white silk dress. Madame de la Roche approved the selection; *if they could afford it*, she added, glancing meaningly at Maitre Beaujeu.

He answered the look with a scowl, and seemed inclined to replace the old pocket book which he had taken out, but a glance at Sylvie dispelled the evil prompting.

“Monsieur Le Grand paid me this morning, Sylvie. There is one hundred francs—your share.”

He laid five glittering Louis d'or in her lap.

“I feel as though I had no right to so large a portion,” she said, hesitatingly.

“You will not find it too large if you have white silk dresses to purchase. I don't intend to give you a lesson to-day.”

The mother groaned audibly, and muttered to herself, “No lesson? Now he'll begin to neglect her, and she'll soon forget all she has acquired.”

Beaujeu heard, but went on without heeding the ungracious remark.

“You have not yet learned what Monsieur Le Grand desires. I am in treaty with him for something *permanent;* we have not come to terms yet. Le Grand *wants us*, so it will not do to seem anxious. There is to be a concert of which he has charge at the Duke ——, in the *Faubourg St. Germain*, next week. We are engaged. Meantime, I will not have you fag yourself out; you want rest, and fresh air, and a generous diet, a bit of meat and a glass of *vin ordinaire* every day for dinner. You must have both to-day. I shall send Ma'm'selle Ursule up to you; give her your orders and the money, and she will purchase your dinner, as well as your dress. Remember, you are to take my prescription, without fail. A mutton chop and a glass of wine, and after that you must rest or amuse yourself; no work, no practising!”

As the door closed upon him, Sylvie's mother exclaimed, querulously: “I foresee he is to become an absolute tyrant over us. He orders our very dinners. He will take the whole control of our domestic concerns before long, and we shall be completely his serfs.”

“No, mother—he is only thinking of what is best for *me*, his pupil. He sees how important it is that I should grow strong, and that is the reason he gives those minute directions, which we are bound to follow.”

Ursule now made her appearance. The appropriateness of the white silk dress was discussed at length, and its purchase decided upon. Then, in obedience to Maitre Beaujeu's commands, for he had given Ursule a hint, it was settled what provisions should be bought for dinner.

“Are you not going with me, Sylvie? Shopping will amuse you; it is a delightful occupation when one has money;” and she glanced significantly at the gold pieces which still lay in Sylvie's lap.

“I would rather stay at home and amuse myself quietly, since I am to have a holiday,” replied Sylvie; she would not confess that she still felt too weak to walk. “But I wish my dear mother could be persuaded to go with you. The day is delightful—the air will do her good, and you need not hurry, so that she will not fatigue herself. Do go, mother!” added Sylvie, beseechingly, as she placed the gold in her mother's hand.

The apathetic mother looked doubtful, but inclined to yield. A little more coaxing and she was conquered. She laid the Louis d'or on the table, and was tying on her bonnet, when in walked her husband. His eyes sparkled as though they reflected the glitter of the gold upon which they rested.

When he was informed of Maitre Beaujeu's orders in regard to Sylvie, he replied gaily, “He is quite right! he's a good fellow! and it's very thoughtful of him;—but *I* will attend to all that. I will be your banker, my rich little daughter!”

He was delightedly gathering up the bright Louis d'or when Ursule interfered, “You must leave us enough to purchase a white silk dress, Monsieur de la Roche; that is indispensable. We shall be very fortunate if we get it for eighty francs—there will be ten over. Have the goodness to wait till we are certain of the exact amount.”

“Nonsense, nonsense, my good Ursule. After I have provided a suitable repast, you shall have the change. This is a very small sum, after all; but of course it is only an earnest of what is to come, and we must try to make it do for the present.”

Saying this, he quietly put the gold pieces into his empty purse and sallied out, leaving his wife and daughter, and their devoted friend, not a little discomfited.

Prudence had been wholly omitted in the elements that composed the character of Everard de la Roche. In his expenditures he never evinced the slightest forethought, or stopped to make the most natural calculations. He invariably purchased (when the means were attainable) whatever pleased his fancy, without condescending to anything so *mean* as economy—without reflecting that there were actual necessaries to which the sum in question ought to be devoted—without ever asking himself whether the money in his possession was his own or belonged to his creditors, and without admitting that honesty made it theirs if it chanced to be due to them.

When he returned to his lodgings an hour later, he was accompanied by a man who carried a large basket. With a munificent air he gave the porter a piece of silver, placed the basket on the table, and with boyish glee bade every one gather around.

First he took out a beautiful bouquet, which he had purchased at the celebrated Madeleine flower-market; this he pronounced absolutely necessary to dress the table for a decent meal. Next he brought forth some large strawberries and some fine cherries; he had evidently selected the best that could be procured of each fruit; then he produced a Perigord pie, (a most expensive delicacy,) some tarts, a pair of fine fowls, a tongue, an ample supply of soup meat, a fresh salmon, some green peas, and artichokes, a bottle of olives, and three bottles, not of *vin ordinaire*, the customary dinner drink of France, but fine claret of choice vintage.

“It was quite a luxury to market once more,” he exclaimed, rubbing his hands, hilariously. “I have so long been denied the inestimable privilege that I really enjoyed it! I fancy we shall dine to-day! My dear Marguerite, do look merry for once! I imagine it is those unbecoming caps of yours which always give your face that gloomy look; see what I have bought to conjure back the expression of old times, and for you to do honor to our dinner by wearing.”

He took from a paper, in which it was neatly folded, a pretty white lace cap, trimmed with bright ribbons, and tossed it toward her.

“But, Monsieur de la Roche, what have you been doing?” asked Ursule, dolefully. “After the money you must have spent in all these provisions, and that cap, how can there be enough left for Sylvie's white dress?”

“My good friend, come and dine with us today, and don't talk nonsense; I really do not know what change I have over, but it will be wanted before our next supply of gold comes in.”

He drew from his pocket a few pieces of silver, among which shone but one remaining Louis d'or. What could Sylvie do? What could her mother say? Both were silent, the one from respect, the other from despair.

Not so Ursule.

“To eat up a white silk dress, which Sylvie needs so much, in this fashion! It's absurd, Monsieur de la Roche! it's monstrous! It's a cannibal proceeding, for it's eating that child's flesh and blood! A few francs would have purchased a capital dinner, and left money enough over for the dress. What *are* we to do?”

“Dine! dine, once more!” returned Monsieur de la Roche, jovially. “My good Ursule, have the philosophy to enjoy the present by dining with us to-day, and not finding fault with my catering for our humble table; and let the dresses of the future take care of themselves! Here, Sylvie, put this bouquet in water—it is for you, who are always so delighted with flowers. I fear you have nothing to hold them but that broken jar; I wish I had thought of buying a pretty vase. How slowly you move, child; are you fatigued? Suppose you stay, my excellent Ursule, and help Sylvie to prepare the repast; but don't let us have that white silk dress dished up for one of the courses.”

“It's *dished*, indeed!” sighed Ursule; but she deemed it useless to remonstrate further, and noticing Sylvie's wan look, considerately remained to prepare a meal which she knew child and mother had hearts too full to enjoy, though the filial daughter never uttered one word of reproach at beholding her first earnings thus recklessly dissipated.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

A CURIOUS WILL.

The fifth day of May,
Being airy and gay,
And to hyp not inclined,
But of vigorous mind,
And my body in health,
I'll dispose of my wealth,
And all I'm to leave
On this side of the grave,
To some one or other,
And I think to my brother,
Because I foresaw,
That my brethren-in-law,
If I did not care,
Would come in for their share,
Which I nowise intended
Till their manners are mended,
And of that, God knows, there's no sign;
I do therefore enjoin,
And do strictly command,
Of which, witness my hand,
That nought I have got
Be brought into hotch pot;
But I give and devise,
As much as in me lies,
To the son of my mother,
My own dear brother,
To have and to hold
All my silver and gold,
As the affectionate pledges
Of his brother, JOHN HEDGES.

[From Carne's Travels.]

MOUNT CARMEL.

No part of the promised land creates a deeper interest in the traveller than the rich and extensive bosom of Mount Carmel; while barrenness spreads on every side, and the curse of the withered soil is felt on hill, valley, and shore, this beautiful mountain seems to retain its ancient “excellency” of flowers, trees, and a perpetual verdure. The scenes in its interior are often bold and romantic in the highest degree; deep and verdant precipices descending into lonely glens, through which a rivulet is seen dashing wildly: the shepherd and his flock on the grassy slopes, that afford at present as rich a pasture ground as in the days when Nabal fed his numerous herds in Carmel. There is indeed a character peculiarly pastoral about the scenery; few grey and naked rocks, or sublime but useless cliffs, are here, as in the mountain of the Temptation, or on Pisgah. And this fertility and vivid verdure, on so sultry a soil, is deeply welcome and refreshing; more especially so the woods that wave over the summit and sides. It is beautiful to stand beneath their shelter on the brink of the mount, and look far on every side, where nought but a forsaken and shadowless land meets the eye. On the banks of the “ancient river,” on which “the strength of the mighty” was broken, and the power of Sisera swept away, no solitary tree spreads its shade; the stream rolls between its green and naked shores: these are so low that the river overflows to some extent on each side during the rainy season, and is so deep and rapid as not to be fordable. It was most probably during this season that the army of Sisera, in its flight, was in part destroyed by the waters, for in its usual narrow course the stream is not of sufficient width and power to be dangerous. Just above, on the side of Carmel, is the spot pointed out by tradition as having been the scene of Elijah's slaying the prophets of Baal. There is much of the picturesque about the place; the soil is strewed with several masses of grey stone, around which are many fine trees. It is a pleasing and lonely spot, such as the imagination would hardly have selected for so ruthless yet necessary a deed. But if tradition should err here, there can be no illusion with respect to the scene of the memorable descent of the fire from heaven. When “all Israel was gathered together unto Carmel,” it was clearly on this side the mountain, where it descends gradually into the noble plain beneath. The spot was finely chosen by the prophet for the spectacle of his sacrifice: since the people, coming from the regions of Samaria, might stand with perfect convenience in the splendid and open area of Esdraelon, which is here terminated at the foot of Carmel. The declivity of the mountain, its brink dark with woods, and its sides covered with the richest pasture, looks over a vast extent of country on every side. What a noble subject would this be for a painter! It was an impressive spot, from which we turned with regret, as the fading light warned us to depart.

THE sun should shine on festivals, but the moon is the light for ruins.

AT THY GRAVE.

BY FINLEY JOHNSON.

The midnight hours are tolling now,
As o'er thy grave I weep;
And though the busy world now lies
Rocked in the arms of sleep,
Yet have I come my sorrowing tears
Upon thy tomb to shed,
And with myself, in bitterness,
To be as thou art—dead.

The solemn shadows of the night
Are clustering round me now;
I feel this damp and chilly mist
Upon my fevered brow;
Yet in my sad and stricken heart
There is a *darker night*,
Compared to which this earthly one
Is beautiful and bright.

I do not seek thy sculptur'd tomb
In the broad glare of day;
That idle ones may mock the grief
That wears my life away;
Oh, no,—but when the midnight stars
Shine brightly down on me,
I seek thy grave, that none may chide
My falling tears for thee.

The dawn is breaking in the East,
Night's shadows flee away;
And I must go and join the world,
And unto it seem gay;
But, oh, there is a pang within
Which none may never know;
A pang that's crushing out my life—
'Tis hopelessness of woe.

THE
DUEL FOR THE DAUGHTER.

Many years ago, Moses Miller, commonly called "Old Mose," resided in the county of Neuces, in Western Texas, some half a dozen miles from the village of Corpus Christi, then the glorious cloud-castle and darling dream of its imaginative builder, the famous Colonel Kinney. And truly, to the eye of the traveller, the smiling face of the country wears the most varied charms, like a vision of enchantment.

Around, from the pellucid waters of that beautiful bay, in every direction, sweeps an immeasurable sea of prairie, sparkling with golden flowers, such as no garden ever planted by human hands might equal, and as full of island groves as the summer sky is of stars. The geniality of the climate rivals, but cannot surpass, the loveliness of the landscape; for in the fiery months of July and August the air is fanned by the cooling wings of balmy breezes from the gulf, and in mid-winter the winds are soft and mild as the vernal zephyrs of northern latitudes.

But alas! the character of the first inhabitants presented a gloomy contrast to the peaceful and picturesque scenery of their rural homes, where all, save man, appeared poetical and divine. The region, being cut off, and in a manner isolated from even the wild civilization of Texas, by an almost impassable desert embracing hundreds of miles, was a sort of *ultima thule*, beyond the reach of law, or any rule of civil jurisdiction; and hence it became the asylum of refugees and rovers from all parts of the world. Nevertheless, it would be grossly unjust to represent the whole, or a majority, of the population as a miscellaneous mass of thieves and murderers. Many of them were honest traders, hunters, and herdsmen; while a large class had sought the solitude of this remote wilderness from the pure love of adventure and the passion for fetterless freedom; and some had been actuated altogether by that genuine American instinct for wandering, like migratory birds—the restless, burning, insatiable desire to penetrate space, and know all the strange things in nature.

Among the rich variety of striking characters contained within the circle of the Neuces settlement, not one could be mentioned so deeply defined and strongly colored as that of old Mose Miller. At the period when the events happened which I am about to relate, he had already seen sixty summers of laborious life, and yet he seemed healthy, vigorous and active as if only in the power and passionate prime of youth. His form was tall, firm, and straight as an arrow, with lean, but massive limbs and muscles, that looked tough as iron, while his rapid feet, thumping the earth scornfully, as if conscious of their strength, rebounded bravely, with the springy ease and elasticity of boyhood. You could perceive no signs of decay, no single token of senility, in his motions or figure.

It is true, his visage had been furrowed by numerous lines in crooked curves and sharp angles; but such marks appeared so natural, and his complexion had such a ruddy glow, like the early flush of juvenile blood, and his countenance seemed so bold, reckless, and free from thought or the tinge of care, that the observer forgot his hoary locks, and beheld nothing but the indications of vivid, manly force and fiery feelings.

A philosopher scanning this *unique* specimen of humanity in the backwoods, would probably have drawn the hasty inference that the sexagenarian had passed his many years in idle repose and utter tranquility, that such a red, merry visage had seldom been distorted by rage, or that those yellowish gray eyes, twinkling with fun and brimming over with laughter, had never flashed the lurid lightnings of horrible hatred and fearful anger.

But the facts of his biography belied the fables of hypothesis. Mose Miller had followed the ever receding frontier, step by step, from the day of his majority, as his father had done before him. His scheme of action was extremely simple, and proved very succcessful. He would settle down in some lonely forest or unpeopled prairie, win his subsistence from the spoils of the chase, and at the same time open a large farm, and stock it with herds of cattle and horses. After a while the tide of emigration would come pouring into the new country, when the first pioneer was sure to reap his golden harvest. Every article of food must, of course, command the highest price, and the cunning speculator always ended by selling out, and wandering farther into the western desert, there to repeat the profitable yet painful experiment, and so on *ad infinitum*.

By continuing this singular process of ceaseless toil and patient self-denial, old Mose finally became the master of a respectable fortune. As may well be imagined, such a method of life exposed him to perpetual dangers, and developed to the highest degree his native courage. His heart grew hard as a fragment of primitive granite, in warfare with the aboriginal savages, and in more horrible combats with the desperadoes and robbers of the frontier; for where legal restraints were either impotent or wholly unknown, the individual sovereign had to rely exclusively on his own prowess and sense of justice for the protection of all rights, and even the preservation of his person, and accordingly, our hero had long been celebrated for the number and ferocity of his dreadful duels and sudden rencounters.

However, it must not be supposed that he contracted the brutal thirst for blood, or the more malignant passion for notoriety, which too often distinguishes the famous fighters of the south-west. On the contrary, he never wielded knife or pistol, save to redress some real or fancied wrong, or to rid society of what he deemed a walking nuisance and absolute outlaw. It is thus easy to comprehend how such a course of habitual conduct, and all the examples and familiar scenes within the sphere of his observation, should lead him to regard bravery as the climax of all virtue, and cowardice as the acme of shame and degradation, if not rather a positive and inexpiable sin.

His family had, at first, consisted of his wife, an industrious commonplace kind of woman, who insensibly imbibed all his notions and prejudices, and seven daughters, all, save one, then provided with husbands and homes; and yet none of them had wedded with the approbation of their parents. The objection in each case was of a general character, that the respective suitors did not come up to the old duellist's standard of bravery, the sole qualification which could find favor in his sight. Indeed, six of the sisters appeared poorly endowed by nature or education to inspire any very ardent flame in heroic hearts, as their forms were coarse and masculine, and their features rude and repulsive.

Nevertheless, the youngest girl differed entirely from the rest, and seemed, as if by a miracle, to have monopolized all the charming graces intended for the separate members of the household; and, truly, you might wander over the world without meeting another being more lovely than Menia Miller. Strange phenomenon, that a family circle of such common clay should be able to exhibit so rare a jewel! But so it sometimes happens: in a lineage of proverbial and hereditary coarseness, there will come one, like a stranger from distant planets, bearing on its visage the living lustre of a celestial beauty, which atones for all the accumulated ugliness of its race, as if the mother's dream of an angel had been embodied in her own bosom! And so this fair flower of the Texan woods presented to every beholder the ideal of his mind and imagination, the faultless form which had floated before his visionary sight in the hours of early youth.

Her shape, though slight and child-like, appeared full to overflowing with animation and vital energy, and every gesture and motion seemed like the rapid and graceful walture of wings in pure ether. Her small features, of a perfect oval, white as the lily, and radiant red as the summer rose, lived in the starry light of an everlasting smile—the sunbeam born of a sinless soul, while those luminous curls of golden hair surrounded her face, as a natural halo, and made her resemble some divine picture, the matchless creation of a musing artist, rather than a mortal thing of flesh and blood. But her eyes alone would have rendered her countenance irresistible; they were so large, liquid, and beautifully blue.

It was no marvel, then, that her parents worshipped this fascinating creature as an idol, and resolved to give her the means of intellectual cultivation, such as they had never thought necessary in the case of their other children. As they could not endure the pangs of her absence from home, even for a single week, a private teacher was procured in the person of a young and handsome lawyer, recently arrived from the north, who had not as yet been honored with a brief, for the unanswerable reason that, where no courts existed, litigation might be considered logically impossible.

Albert Hilton succeeded but too well in his agreeable work of tuition, for at the end of six short months he had taught his beautiful pupil the sweet mysteries of first love, and mastered the same profound and pleasant lesson, of which he had been previously altogether ignorant, so that they were both prepared to take the highest degree at the bridal altar.

Without anticipating the least opposition to a step so innocent and desirable, the young attorney, so soon as he had settled the matter to their mutual satisfaction with the daughter, proposed the subject, in faltering terms, to the father.

"I am amazed at the extent of your impudence and presumption," responded Old Mose, with a look of astonishment, and casting an ominous glance at the silver handle of his bowie-knife.

"I can furnish you with ample proofs as to the respectability and wealth of my family," urged Hilton, by way of argument.

"I care not if you were worth millions," returned Miller, with a disdainful frown.

"Of what nature, then, can be your objection?" inquired the youth, in tones of surprise.

"Your want of courage," was the stern reply.

"I cannot imagine from what fictitious data you have deduced your conclusion," said Hilton, with a hightened color.

"Cowardice is so common," retorted the father, "that I hold every man a craven until he shows evidence to the contrary!"

"What testimony would you have on so nice a point?" asked the suitor, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"Fight a duel!" exclaimed the other imperatively.

"But no person has insulted me, or offered the slightest provocation for a quarrel," affirmed Hilton, scarcely able to credit his senses at such a strange suggestion.

"You lie!" thundered Old Mose; "for I insult you, and unless you have the nerve to accept my challenge, be sure that my daughter never shall be yours!"

"Such a combat would disgrace us both," retorted the lover, in accents of horror.

"Did I not say that you were a coward?" shouted the duellist, in a towering rage. "Be off instantly from my premises, and never let me see your pale face again within a league of my dwelling!" And he drew his murderous blade of battle to enforce prompt obedience, when the disappointed schoolmaster made a hurried exit, without so much as the formality of an adieu.

But the inconsolable grief and despair of the fair Menia, for the loss of her lover, affected her father to such a degree, that he adopted a sudden resolution, and set out for Corpus Christi. There he found Albert Hilton in the streets, and without uttering a word, began to chastise him by the shameful punishment of the horse-whip. The latter resisted with all his might, but his efforts proved idle, for he seemed helpless as a child in the iron grasp of the old giant.

As soon as he had laid on the lash sufficiently to disgrace the victim forever, the duellist exclaimed—

"Young man, you will fight me now, I suppose?"

"Yes! yes! let us arrange the affair at once!" cried the other, eagerly, trembling with ungovernable rage.

The parties immediately selected their seconds, settled the terms of the hostile interview, and proceeded to the field of honor, accompanied by an excited throng of spectators, anxious to witness the terrible sport. The ground being measured off, the principals took their positions, at the unusual distance of fifteen paces.

At the word both adversaries fired, but without effect; and Old Mose called out in courteous tones—

"Is the gentleman satisfied, or does he wish another round?"

"Nothing can wash away my shame, but your blood or my own," replied Hilton, in accents of inconceivable sadness.

Their friends then reloaded the pistols, and the foes discharged them with a similar result, when Miller declared—

"I am willing to apologize."

"It is too late!" answered the youth, in a mournful voice, or rather wail of unspeakable sorrow.

Once more they prepared their weapons, and this time pulled their triggers with steady, unwavering aim. Again Old Mose missed, and at the same instant tottered, and fell upon the earth; but he quickly recovered his feet, the ball having merely cut across his breast, touching the bone, without inflicting a dangerous wound.

The veteran duellist, with a smile of pleasure, iterated his proffered apology, adding the singular explanation:

"I could have shot out your eye at the first fire, had I been so disposed; but I only sought to test your bravery. I have found it of the highest order, and now you may have Menia in welcome!"

It is needless to remark that the issue turned out satisfactory to all parties concerned.

AFTER A SHADOW.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Arty! Arty!" called Mrs. Mayflower, from the window, one bright June morning. "Arty, darling! What is the child after? Just look at him, Mr. Mayflower!"

I leaned from the window, in pleasant excitement to see what new and wonderful performance had been attempted by my little prodigy—my first born—my year old bud of beauty, the folded leaves in whose bosom were just beginning to loosen themselves and send out upon the air sweet intimations of an abounding fragrance. He had escaped from his nurse, and was running off in the clear sunshine, the slant rays of which threw a long Shadow before him.

"Arty, darling!" His mother's voice flew along and past his ear, kissing it in gentle remonstrance as it went by. But baby was in eager pursuit of something, and the call if heard, was unheeded. His eyes were opening worldward and every new phenomenon—commonplace and unheeded by us—that addressed itself to his senses, became a wonder and a delight. Some new object was drawing him away from the loving heart and protecting arm.

"Run after him, Mr. Mayflower!" said my wife, with a touch of anxiety in her voice. "He might fall and hurt himself."

I did not require a second intimation as to my duty in the case. Only a moment or two elapsed before I was on the pavement, and making rapid approaches toward my truant boy.

"What is it, darling? What is Arty running after?" I said, as I laid my hand on his arm, and checked his eager speed. He struggled a moment, and then stood still, stooping forward for something on the ground.

"Oh, papa! see!" There was a disappointed and puzzled look in his face as he lifted his eyes to mine. He had failed to secure the object of his pursuit.

"What is it, sweet?" My eyes followed his as they turned upon the ground.

He stooped again and caught at something; and again looked up in a perplexed, half-wondering way.

"Why Arty!" I exclaimed, catching him up in my arms. "It's only your shadow! Foolish child!" And I ran back to Mrs. Mayflower, with my baby-boy held close against my heart.

"After a shadow!" said I, shaking my head a little soberly, as I resigned Arty to his mother. "So life begins—and so it ends! Poor Arty!"

Mrs. Mayflower laughed out right merrily.

"After his shadow! Why, darling!" And she kissed and hugged him in overflowing tenderness.

"So life begins—so it ends," I repeated to myself, as I left the house and walked towards my store. "Always in pursuit of shadows! We lose to-day's substantial good for shadowy phantoms that keep our eyes ever in advance, and our feet ever hurrying forward. No pause—no ease—no full enjoyment of now. Oh, deluded heart!—ever bartering away substance for shadow!"

I grow philosophic sometimes. Thought will, now and then, take up a passing incident, and extract the moral. But how little the wiser are we for moralizing! We look into the mirror of truth, and see ourselves—then turn away, and forget what manner of men we are. Better for us if it were not so; if we remembered the image that held our vision.

The shadow lesson was forgotten by the time I reached my store, and thought entered into business with its usual ardor. I buried myself amid letters, invoices, accounts, samples, schemes for gain and calculations of profit. The regular, orderly progression of a fair and well established business was too slow for my outreaching desires. I must drive onward at a higher speed, and reach the goal of wealth by a quicker way. So my daily routine was disturbed by impatient aspirations. Instead of entering, in a calm self-possession of every faculty, into the day's appropriate work, and finding, in its right performance, the tranquil state that ever comes as the reward of right-doing in the right place, I spent the larger part of this day in the perpetration of a plan for increasing my gains beyond anything heretofore achieved.

"Mr. Mayflower," said one of my clerks, coming back to where I sat at my private desk, busy over my plan, "we have a new man in from the west, a Mr. B——, from Alton. He wants to make a bill of a thousand dollars. Do you know anything about him?"

Now, even this interruption annoyed me. What was a new customer and a bill of a thousand dollars to me just at that moment of time? I saw tens of thousands in prospective.

"Mr. B——, of Alton!" said I, affecting an effort of memory. "Does he look like a fair man?"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't recall him. Mr. B——? Hum-m-m. He impresses you favorably, Edward?"

"Yes, sir; but it may be prudent to send and get a report."

"Ill see to that, Edward," said I. "Sell him what he wants. If every thing is not on the square, I'll give you the word in time. It's all right, I've no doubt."

"He's made a bill at Kline & Co.'s, and wants his goods sent there to be packed," said my clerk.

"Ah, indeed! Let him have what he wants, Edward. If Kline & Co. sell him, we needn't hesitate."

And turning to my desk, my plans and my calculations, I forgot all about Mr. B——, and the trifling bill of a thousand dollars that he proposed buying. How clear the way looked ahead! As thought created the means of successful adventure, and I saw myself moving forward and grasping results, the whole circle of life took a quicker motion, and my mind rose into a pleasant enthusiasm. Then I grew impatient for the initiatory steps that were to come, and felt as if the to-morrow in which they must be taken would never appear. A day seemed like a week or a month.

Six o'clock found me in not a very satisfactory state of mind. The ardor of my calculations had commenced abating. Certain elements, not seen and considered in the outset, were beginning to assume shape and consequence, and to modify, in many essential particulars, the grand result towards which I had been looking with so much pleasure. Shadowy and indistinct became the landscape, which seemed a little while before so fair and inviting. A cloud settled down upon it here, and a cloud there, breaking up its unity, and destroying much of its fair proportion. I was no longer mounting up, and moving forwards on the light wing of a castle-building imagination, but down upon the hard, rough ground, coming back into the consciousness that all progression, to be sure, must be slow and toilsome.

I had the afternoon paper in my hands, and was running my eyes up and down the columns, not reading, but, in a half-absent way, trying to find something of sufficient interest to claim attention, when, among the money and business items, I came upon a paragraph that sent the declining thermometer of my feelings away down towards the chill of zero. It touched, in the most vital part, my scheme of gain; and the shrinking bubble burst.

"Have the goods sold to that new customer from Alton been delivered?" I asked, as the real interests of my wasted day loomed up into sudden importance.

"Yes, sir," was answered by one of my clerks. "They were sent to Kline & Co.'s, immediately. Mr. B—— said they were packing up his goods, which were to be shipped to-day."

"He's a safe man, I should think. Kline & Co. sell him." My voice betrayed the doubt that came stealing over me like a chilly air.

"They sell him only for cash," said my clerk. "I saw one of their young men this afternoon, and asked after Mr. B——'s standing. He didn't know anything about him; said B—— was a new man, who bought a moderate cash bill, but was sending in large quantities of goods to be packed—five or six times beyond the amount of his purchases with them.

"Is that so!" I exclaimed, rising to my feet, all awake now to the real things which I had permitted a shadow to obscure.

"Just what he told me," answered my clerk.

"It has a bad look," said I. "How large a bill did he make with us?"

The sales book was referred to. "Seventeen hundred dollars," replied the clerk.

"What! I thought he was to buy only to the amount of a thousand dollars?" I returned, in surprise and dismay.

"You seemed so easy about him, sir," replied the clerk, "that I encouraged him to buy; and the bill ran up more heavily than I was aware until the footing gave exact figures."

I drew out my watch. It was close on to half past six.

"I think, Edward," said I, "that you'd better step round to Kline & Co.'s, and ask if they've shipped B——'s goods yet. If not, we'll request them to delay long enough in the morning to give us time to sift the matter. If B——'s after a swindling game, we'll take a short course, and save our goods."

"It's too late," answered my clerk. "B—— called a little after one o'clock, and gave notes for the amount of his bill. He was to leave in the five o'clock line for Boston."

I turned my face a little aside, so that Edward might not see all the anxiety that was pictured there.

"You look very sober, Mr. Mayflower," said my good wife, gazing at me with eyes a little shaded by concern, as I sat with Arty's head leaning against my bosom that evening; "as sober as baby looked this morning, after his fruitless shadow chase."

"And for the same reason," said I, endeavoring to speak calmly and firmly.

"Why, Mr. Mayflower!" Her face betrayed a rising anxiety. My assumed calmness and firmness did not wholly disguise the troubled feelings that lay, oppressively, about my heart.

"For the same reason," I repeated, steadying my voice, and trying to speak bravely. "I have been chasing a shadow all day; a mere phantom scheme of profit; and at night-fall I not only lose my shadow, but find my feet far off from the right path, and bemired. I called Arty a foolish child this morning. I laughed at his mistake. But, instead of accepting the lesson it should have conveyed, I went forth and wearied myself with shadow-hunting all day."

Mrs. Mayflower sighed gently. Her soft eyes drooped away from my face, and rested, for some moments, on the floor.

"I am afraid we are all, more or less, in pursuit of shadows," she said. "Of the unreal things, projected by thought on the canvas of a too creative imagination. It is so with me; and I sigh, daily, over some disappointment—alas! if this were all. Too often, both the shadow-good and the real-good of to-day are lost. When night falls our phantom-good is dispersed, and we sigh for the real good we might have enjoyed."

"Shall we ever grow wiser?" I asked.

"We shall never grow happier unless we do," answered Mrs. Mayflower.

"Happiness!" I returned, as thought began to rise into clearer perception, "Is not the shadow after which we are all chasing, with such a blind and headlong speed?"

"Happiness is no shadow. It is a real thing," said Mrs. Mayflower. "It does not project itself in advance of us; but exists in the actual and the now, if it exists at all. We cannot catch it by pursuit; that is only a cheating counterfeit, in gilt and tinsel, which dazzles our eyes in the ever receding future. No: happiness is a state of life; and it comes only to those who do each day's work in a peaceful self-forgetfulness, and a calm trust in the Giver of all Good for the blessing that lies stored for each one prepared to receive it, in every hour of the coming time."

"Who so does each day's work in a peaceful self-forgetfulness, and patient trust in God?" I said, turning my eyes away from the now tranquil face of Mrs. Mayflower.

"Few, if any, I fear," she answered; "and few, if any, are happy. The common duties and common things of our to-days, look so plain and homely in their ungilded actualities, that we turn our thought and interest away from them and create ideal forms of use and beauty, into which we can never enter with conscious life. We are always losing the happiness of our to-days; and our to-morrows never come."

I sighed my response, and sat for a long time silent. When the tea bell interrupted me from my reverie, Arty lay fast asleep on my bosom. As I kissed him on his way to his mother's arms, I said:

"Dear baby! may it be your first and last pursuit of a shadow."

"No—no! Not yet, my sweet one!" answered Mrs. Mayflower, hugging him to her heart. "Not yet. We cannot spare you from our world of shadows."

* * *

Trifles not to be trifled with.—A friend called on Michael Angelo, who was finishing a statue. Some time afterwards he called again; the sculptor was still at his work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed: "You have been idle since I saw you last!" "By no means," replied the sculptor; "I have retouched this part, and polished that; I have softened this feature, and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb." "Well, well," said his friend, "but all these are trifles." "It may be so," replied Angelo; "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER
BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

At best, life is not very long. A few more smiles, a few more tears, some pleasure, much pain, sunshine and song, clouds and darkness, hasty greetings, abrupt farewells—then our little play will close, and injured and injurer will pass away. Is it worth while to hate each other?

It is an evil thing needlessly to cause a human being pain, but it is a fearful thing to inflict it on a creature that cannot speak, for it must be that there is always somewhere a tongue to tell, a mysterious witness to bear testimony.

The better the day the better the deed is a bad proverb as it runs, but read it backwards, as wizards undo charms, and it is a capital saying—the better the deed the better the day.

The extension of the boundaries of your knowledge, unlike the extension of the boundaries of your farm, never narrows or extinguishes the possessions of your neighbors.

If you would be a man of genius, hold intercourse with men of genius. By being in contact with a magnet, you may become a magnet.

Sorrow is never more sorrowful than when it jests at its own misery. A poor fellow complained that he was like the moon—on his last quarter.

There are two classes of disappointed lovers—those who are disappointed before marriage, and the more unhappy ones who are disappointed after it.

A great poet says that "the mountains stand fixed forever." We know, however, that it is no uncommon thing for them to *slope*.

Force not the mind of the child to premature study. Do not trim and prune the young vine in the season of its blossoming.

Red noses are lighthouses to warn voyagers on the sea of life off the coast of Malaga, Jamaica, Santa Cruz and Holland.

It is not so unpleasant to a poor young woman to wait upon the gentlemen, as it is to a proud old maid to be waitinn *for* them.

Sewing girls cannot be expected to compete with sewing machines, for they haven't such iron constitutions.

Look well to your daughters; sparks falling upon your house are often less dangerous than those coming into it.

Oftentimes the world and the flesh are not much better than the other distinguished member of the firm.

Poets are generally poor; rhymes make but indifferent bladders to support the swimmer on the sea of life.

The whole enchantment of beauty lies in mystery; if the necessary union of its elements is dissolved, its essence is dissolved also.

The Sublime constructs for us a passage from the sensuous world, in which the Beautiful would fain hold us always captive.

Music is the wine which inspires new creations, and the great composer is the Bacchus who presses it out for mankind, and makes them spirit-drunk.

"Have I not, my son, given you every advantage?" "Oh, yes, but I couldn't think of taking advantage of *you*, father."

If the world knocks you down and jostles by you in its great race, don't sit whining under people's feet, but get up, rub your elbows and begin again.

No maiden ever unlocked her heart to her lover, but a kiss was the first prisoner to fly out.

Some men inherit wealth from their ancestors; a thief, if he gets rich, does it "on his own *hook*."

Fewer persons are killed in a bold advance than in a cowardly retreat.

If you desire never to look old, keep your heart young, and let it glow in your face.

Be not discouraged; stand upright, and you will be sure to have the whole earth at your feet.

What many a man calls conscience is only a wholesome fear of the constable.

It is very possible to be too witty to be earnest, and too earnest to be witty.

Envy has sore eyes; they are pained by everything bright.

Surgeons are waggish fellows; they live by running saws on their patients.

Life is a beautiful night, in which, as some stars go down, others rise.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A Newburyport paper says that a pair of runaway horses ran through the streets of that place the other day, drawing a coach after them, a distance of twelve miles, and got back to the stable from whence they started in fifty-three minutes after they set out, and that they turned all the corners and kept the road as well as though they had been guided by a driver.

A stranger, seemingly about sixty years of age, well-dressed and of respectable appearance, went into a barber's shop in Wooster street one morning recently, and took his seat to be shaved, and almost immediately fell dead to the floor. He had fifty dollars in cash in his pocket-book, but there was no clue to his identity.

A drunken vagabond, living in Albany, was recently found in his miserable shanty, stretched on two chairs, while in a corner his wife and four small children were huddled, nearly perished with cold and hunger, and their clothes saturated with water, which covered the floor to the depth of nearly a foot.

A contractor who had the oversight of work that was progressing in Williamsburgh, was standing in an excavation the other day, when the bank caved in and completely buried him, and although he was dug out with the utmost possible expedition, he died before he was rescued.

An old lady, aged eighty years, hearing burglars trying to force an entrance into her house one night recently, got up, took a pair of old tongs to the window, thrust them out, and snapping them together, exclaimed, "My pistol missed fire." The burglars did not stop to investigate, but hastily fled.

A much esteemed clergyman, living in Alabama, having tasted liquor for the first time, on a recent festive occasion, became intoxicated, and on becoming sober, he was so terribly mortified that he committed suicide.

Two Germans, who are brothers, recently murdered a man near Manchester, Mo., and after rifling the body, they dragged it into the woods, piled brush over it, and setting the combustibles on fire, burned it to a crisp.

Two highly respectable gentlemen of Winchester, Va., who were brothers-in-law and about the same age, both died recently on the same night and at the same hour.

A baby was found on the ice of the creek a Chicago, not long since, where it is supposed it had been purposely left. The poor little thing was nearly frozen, but by kind nursing it was restored.

A man forty-two years of age, who had got disgusted with the world, took a large dose of laudanum at his house in William street, the other night, and soon died, though every effort was made to save him.

A man was arrested in St. Louis, a short time since, for robbing a till, on the ground that he resembled a shadow that was seen on the wall at the time the till was supposed to have been robbed.

An aged man, who was driving a team of oxen in Bethlehem, in this State, was jammed between the wagon and a tree, and crushed to death.

A pedestrian carried a man ten miles in two hours and twenty minutes, at Haverhill, Mass., a short time since, on a wager of one dollar.

A manager of the Bank of Upper Canada, living in Brockville, lately decamped, being a defaulter to the bank to the extent of twenty thousand dollars.

A man named Baker, living in Baxter-street, went to bed in seemingly perfect health one night lately, and was found dead in his bed the next morning.

An intemperate woman, while sitting in her chair, at her residence in a low alley near the Tombs, suddenly fell to the floor and died almost instantaneously.

There were no less than five murders perpetrated in this city and Brooklyn recently, within a period of thirty-six hours.

A young man twenty years of age, got into a street row one night recently, and received a stab in the side which occasioned his death in a few hours.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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We always stop the Ledger at the expiration of the year, or the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue, it it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

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THE PEOPLE'S BOOKS.

Free libraries are good things. We cannot have too many of them. Money, laid out in founding them, is more usefully employed than when expended in endowing colleges. But after all, *newspapers* are the Books of the People. The modern newspaper (so-called) is not simply a record of current events, accompanied by such comments as they suggest to the editor. The name is an insufficient one for the modern daily or weekly publication. It was well enough for the gazette of forty or fifty years ago; but it affords no index to the scope and instructive capacity of that universal teacher, the public press of the present day. There is no topic within the range of useful knowledge, of mental entertainment, of the world of fact or of fancy, upon which the newspapers do not touch—upon which, indeed, they do not throw floods of light. Almost everything of interest to the popular mind first finds its way to the surface, through these channels of information that irrigate and fructify the whole realm of intellect. The pith and marrow of thousands of elaborate quartos and octavos, divested of the technicalities which render the books themselves "caviare to the general," or in plainer words, mysteries to the million, are to be found in the columns of sheets thrown off by tens of thousands from the never-resting newspaper press, and scattered broadcast over the land. The harvest of this perpetual sowing is popular intelligence. The brain of the people feeds upon it and expands.

The greatest minds of the nation talk with the masses through the periodical press. Well-conducted newspapers are no longer a volatile element of our literature. They are not fugitive publications, that float out of our hands into those of the trunk-maker. We have them bound, and place them on our library shelves. They are history—political history, social history, art history, literary history, commercial history, the history of invention, discovery, universal progress! They are the essence of books.

Why, a man with a good common school foundation may finish his education with the periodical press, and find plenty of amusement in its columns as he goes along. Whatever is important in fact, or ennobling and refining in fiction, is sent forth—almost for a song—from this grand distributive reservoir of information and enjoyment.

No wonder that scores of eager hands are stretched forth at every railroad station, when the cars bearing the family newspaper arrive. People raise their hands and eyes in amazement at the prodigious circulation of the Ledger. Let these wonder-struck individuals reflect upon the amount of mind of the highest order which it brings into direct and cheap communication with the million, and their surprise will cease.

STATE TRUMPERY.

No greater insult can be offered to the intelligence of a nation, than is implied by the decoration of its rulers, representatives and magistrates in imposing costumes, for the purpose of inspiring respect for their persons and offices in the minds of the masses. This miserable trickery has prevailed from time immemorial in all monarchies, and is just as tenaciously adhered to in England as in China or Japan. The Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom wears a preposterous wig, and a ridiculous uniform, when he takes his seat on the absurd caricature of a woolsack appropriated to his use in the British House of Lords. An English Judge must make a Judy of himself, so far as dress is concerned, before he takes his seat on the bench, and the sheriff who attends him in a gilt gingerbread coach to court, must be attired in full dress, with bagwig and sword, and lace ruffles at his wrists. On State occasions the peers must stand before their sovereign in the conventional livery of their order, and the peeresses come into "the presence" with painted faces and yards of superfluous dry-goods dragging at their heels; while the monarch who presides over the raree-show is robed and diamonded and diademed as if supremacy and show, dignity and decoration, were one and inseparable. The object of all this trumpery is to impress and overawe the multitude. What a compliment to the common sense of the people of England. They are supposed to have as much reverence for gewgaws as the South Sea Islanders. The theory is that stage effect is the most potential element of monarchical rule. What a commentary upon the sagacity of the third estate! In this country of common schools, where the people have been ruled for eighty odd years by plain men in plain clothes, we don't hanker much after a government in full dress. Brains in broadcloth suffice us. At the same time it must be conceded that the prevailing prejudices and notions on the subject of dress and costume are pretty deep-seated in the public mind. Thus, for instance, if a man were to appear in a coat of tar and feathers, it would be impossible for him in that garb, even by the most exemplary conduct, immediately to conciliate the general respect.

A MILD WINTER.

In the city of New York we have had, up to this time, a remarkably mild winter. The thermometer has hardly been more than twice down to zero, we believe in no instance more than two or three degrees below; while in Springfield, Massachusetts, only 136 miles distant, it has been down to 30° below. Perhaps the warm hearts of the New Yorkers help to keep the mercury from sinking.

This comparative mildness of the weather is a matter of momentous importance to the poor. After the mercury reaches a certain point, the mortality of the city increases invariably with every degree which it descends. People with plenty of clothing and plenty of food enjoy quite as good health in colder weather, with its clear, bracing atmosphere; but it is not so with those who are pinched by hunger and want.

BYRON'S UNWRITTEN POEM.

It is not generally known that Lord Byron, a few years before his death, sketched the outlines of a dramatic poem, the plan of which would have afforded a wider scope for his erratic genius than that of any one of his completed works. No mention of it occurs, we believe, in either Galt's or Moore's biography of the poet, and the only allusion to it we have ever seen in print was contained in a brief magazine article written by the late Washington Irving, twenty-five years ago, but which is not incorporated in any edition of the works of that lamented author. The *projet* of the poem was communicated by Byron to his friend Captain Medwin, and by him to Mr. Irving. As nearly as we can recollect, it was as follows: The hero is a young Castilian grandee, haughty and impetuous by nature, and the slave of strong passions rendered ungovernable by indulgence. In the midst of a career of the wildest dissipation, he suddenly becomes aware that he is watched and followed by a figure in disguise, of whose features he finds it impossible to obtain a glimpse. He meets this mysterious spy everywhere, but all his efforts to identify him with any of his acquaintance, or to discover his name, place of abode, or country, are futile. Finally the mysterious intruder becomes the young nobleman's second self—seems to be cognizant not only of his every action but of his every thought. Like Mephistophiles in Faust, this being is ever at his victim's elbow, not, however, for the purpose of fulfilling his wishes, but of marring the pleasure he anticipates from successful intrigue and gratified ambition.

Under this terrible espionage, the hero of the drama at length becomes a sullen, suspicious, vindictive misanthrope. He suspects the unknown of being his rival in love, and after a long pursuit involving a series of the most romantic adventures, at last tracks him to the house of his mistress. There they fight, and at the first lunge the mysterious stranger receives the young hidalgo's sword through his heart. As he falls, his disguise drops off, and the victor discovers in his rival a duplicate of *himself!* The shock unsettles his reason and he dies in a paroxysm of horror and despair. The intrusive spectre is intended to typify conscience or remorse.

Such, as nearly as we can recall them, are the main features of the plot, which was to have been worked up into a dramatic poem of terrible intensity.

SWINDLING GIFT-PUBLISHERS. — A POSTMASTER'S OPINION OF THEM.

A postmaster, in sending us the names and subscriptions of twenty-four subscribers, says:

"I often have circulars sent to me from publishers who offer premiums of books, jewelry, or lottery tickets, to anybody who will subscribe for their papers and pay in advance. In a few instances I got up clubs for these "gift" publishers, but, as in every case, their papers turned out to be poor things, and stopped before the year was out, I now never pay any attention to their circulars. In fact, my experience has led me to think that when a publisher offers to hire people to take his paper, he acknowledges that of itself it is not worth taking, and it also strikes me that such concerns must be on a rather rotten foundation, or they would not try so hard to bribe strangers, who know nothing about them, to send them money in advance."

We think that our country friend has hit a pretty big nail on the head. It has become the fashion, for a certain class of publishers, whose papers contain little, if anything, of interest or value, to "bribe people"—as our friend the postmaster says—"to *send them money in advance*," by offers of books, watches, jewelry, lottery tickets, chances to "draw a farm," &c., &c. All papers which are sought to be sustained in this way, seem to have two traits in common: they are equally stupid and short lived. "Money in advance" seems to have a bad effect on them; at any rate, they generally die after getting a lot of it. What is the reason of this? It is because these "gift" papers are always published either by dishonest men, or by men who do not understand their business. Offering premiums is not the way to make a paper succeed. The Ledger, for instance, has a circulation much larger than that of all these "premium offering" publications put together; and the great reason of this may be found in the fact that, instead of trying to "hire" people to take it, by offers of books, cheap jewelry, lottery tickets, farms, &c., we expend our money in securing the best writers of the day, and make a paper which people buy *because they want it*. It seems, however, that you cannot make some of these would-be publishers believe that it is the best policy to engage the best writers and fill their papers with the best possible contributions.

WHEN SHALL A LADY TAKE A GENTLEMAN'S ARM?

Watertown, Jan. 11th, 1861.

Mr. Bonner—*Dear Sir*:—In the Ledger of Jan. 19th, your answer to Orient says, *a lady*, when not married or betrothed to a gentleman she is walking with, should not take his arm in the day-time.

Should she take his arm in the evening; and if so, why not in the day-time?

Respectfully, yours, P. Q. B.

The greater necessity for protection in the evening requires that the lady should be nearer the gentleman. In regard to this whole matter, different practices prevail in different localities. In some places, if a lady takes the arm of a gentleman with whom she is walking, in the day time, it is regarded as an admission that the two are engaged to be married. It is very judicious for young people to pay respect to the social customs of this nature prevailing where they live. On the other hand, it is not to be regarded as a very heinous crime for a respectable young lady to accept the arm of a respectable young man who is escorting her at any time, day or evening.

A BLESSED DAY.

What a blessed day is Sunday to the weary man who necessarily catches but brief glimpses of home during the toiling week; who is off in the morning while little eyes are still closed in slumber, nor back at night till they are again sealed by sleep. What would *he* know of the very children for whom he toils, were it not for the blessed breathing respite of Sunday? What honest working-man's child will ever forget *this* day, when, clean and neat, it is his privilege to climb Papa's knee, and hang about his neck, and tell him all the news which goes to make up his narrow little world. "Narrow," did we say? we recall the word, for it widens out into the boundless ocean of eternity. Sunday for the working-man's children! So would we have it—a day hallowed by sweet, pure home influences; when the little band, quite complete, shall rest from labor, and *Love* shall write it down the blessed day of all the seven.

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How to Cure Bad Manners.—Professor Forshey, in an article which we publish to-day, maintains that the only way to teach good manners is to introduce military discipline into civil schools. The idea is original, and deserves the consideration of parents and teachers. Many eminent soldiers have been noted for their politeness. Gen. Jackson was said to possess the most elegant personal address of any man in his day, and our eminent contributor, Gen. Morris, is unquestionably one of the most polite as well as gallant men of our own times.

FELINE MEW-SINGS.

Man is naturally a lazy animal. This is apparent in many things, but in none more than in his manner of reading a newspaper. After the fashion of Ponto with a bone, he retires to his corner, with glaring eye-balls and both paws over it. Like him he is not to be diverted from his purpose of extracting every particle of toothsome marrow; like him he has a growl for all intruders. Now, woman being of the squirrel order, and contumacious withal, is apt to frisk round this solemn Behemoth for a stray crumb of knowledge. Deluded frisker! when she has so *often* been informed there is "nothing special in the paper," although it *does* take him an hour by the clock to read "nothing special!" The truth is, and there's no use dodging it, the creature is too lazy to talk about it! Let a *woman* take up a newspaper. Instantly there is a buzz and a stir. Everybody present knows in a twinkling, who has done what; interlarded with spicy impromptu remarks, and petticoat views of things; if not always "profound," speaking according to the manner of men, yet natural and merry. In ten minutes or more, you shall have a digest of that paper that's worth hearing. Catch *her* to keep the cud of information for her own private chewing! *She's* sympathetic. She wants somebody to admire with her some patriotic sentiment or heroic action; she wants to air her opinions on this subject or that. She could no more fold up that paper and sit staring into the ashes in the grate, silently pondering its contents, than she could help walking up to a looking-glass whenever she enters a room; or than she can help being treacherous to her own sex and faithful to the other; or than she can help turning the spangled side of her fan to the audience at the opera, or selecting that side of her bonnet which is next *his* pew, to fasten the killing rose-bud or bow. She can no more help it, than a man can help making the same threadbare compliments to every woman he meets, under the profound hallucination that they never compare notes on the subject; she can no more help it than he can divest himself of his chronic horror of a bandbox or a door-mat. Not to put too fine a point upon it, there is a great difference between man and woman. I don't quarrel with it.

Fanny Fern.

THE DRESS QUESTION.

There is a great deal of talk about reform in female dress, and there is undoubted need of reform; but none of any consequence ever will take place, while the very men who ridicule and abjure the prevailing style, would be the very last to sanction any change in the apparel of their own wives and daughters, which should make them the subjects of public remark, even though that change were sanctioned by modesty, health, and common sense. In other words, no man likes his *own* wife or daughter to be the *first* to introduce even a sensible fashion; and as *somebody* must be first, and as every woman is *somebody's* wife or daughter, we think it is logical to infer that the fault lies quite as much with the men as the women, in fact they have often done their best to quench praiseworthy attempts in this direction. We can lay our finger now, upon one of these pussy-catty, male books of "advice to women," in which the author condemns in the strongest terms, the sensible red woollen petticoats adopted by ladies for stormy, cold weather. He even goes so far as to say that ladies who have a proper regard for decorum, should not by any means adopt so improper a fashion! The present universal use of the sensible, comfortable "Balmoral Skirt," in our sloppy streets by the ladies, may have convinced this author of "advice to women," that his qualifications for that office were of doubtful order. We say the less men meddle and advise about female dress the better, till they can muster moral courage enough to do something besides *find fault*; till they cease throwing obstacles in the way of the ladies of their own families when ever they attempt to emancipate themselves from the present disease-breeding thraldom of modern dress. Thank Providence, there are men to whom these remarks do not apply.

Fanny Fern.

A SLEIGH-RIDE—LOVE AND LAW.

A suit has been commenced in the Superior Court in this city, of a novel character, the parties thereto being, as the reporters say, "members of some of our most distinguished families," and the facts being of a mirth-provoking nature. It seems that the plaintiff, whom we will call Mr. A, recently took his lady-love out sleigh-riding, late one pleasant afternoon. As the shades of evening began to fall, the lovers stopped at a hotel on the road, for refreshments. While they were enjoying themselves in the inn, a rival of Mr. A's, who was doubtless somewhat thrown off his balance by the "delicacies of the season," and being incited by the spirit of mischief, left the party of young bloods with whom he was "having a time," slipped out, and appropriating the lover's horse and sleigh, drove off with it. His boon companions soon followed him, leaving Mr. A and the young lady the sole guests at the inn. After a while, the young gentleman ordered his horse to be brought round, and then came the denouement. Of course, the young couple were in a most unpleasant predicament. It was getting rather late, and they were engaged to attend a party, the giver of which they would be most unwilling to disappoint. And really, when they came to inquire, there seemed to be but two alternatives: they must either walk home, or stay at the tavern. There was no conveyance to be had, the landlord said, certainly none that he know of. But a double-eagle finally extricated the unfortunate couple from their dilemma, by inducing the landlord to "hunt up something that would take 'em in." The next day Mr. A learned who it was that had run off with his establishment, and at once placed the matter in the hands of his attorney. Hence the suit mentioned.

A PATHETIC LETTER.

The Rev. Dr. Charles Lowell, of Boston, addressed a letter from his sick room, to his people, New Year's day, in which the following touching and impressive paragraph occurs:

"Fifty-three years ago, by the unanimous vote "of the church and proprietors, voting together, "I was called to the ministry of this church. "Of those who voted on that occasion, not one "remains on earth. Of those who, as ministers "and delegates from other churches, assisted in "the ordination, not one is living. Of those in "all denominations who were ministers in the "town at the time, none are living. No, not "one."

Just think of yourself in the place where you now live, at some future day, with not one other person, of all you now know, remaining alive!

MR. EVERETT ON THE PASSPORT SYSTEM.

It is announced that Louis Napoleon has recently dispensed with the odious passport system, so far as it relates to Englishmen travelling in France. This is a step in the right direction, and we honor the French Emperor for the enlightened and liberal policy which it inflicates. We shall publish an article on this subject, next week, from the pen of the Hon. Edward Everett, which is exceedingly interesting and instructive.

THOUGHTS AS THEY OCCUR.---No. 80.

BY ONE WHO KEEPS HIS EYES AND EARS OPEN.

Mr. Bonner—It is a great pleasure to write a paper upon *good nature*, to a good-natured man; just as it is fit to speak of justice before a just judge, or of art before a refined person. Are you not good-natured? Then the handwriting on the face is not spelled rightly. The form, too, and all the personal circumstances, agree! There is something in breadth of body and largeness of countenance that always suggests generous and good-natured disposition. Good nature seems to require some space on which to unroll. Lines and angles are for wit. A smooth brow and corrugated cheek indicate thought. This matter of the cheek, however, is purely stomachic, and not cerebral. A sunken cheek and thin face under a large brow show that the brain cheats the stomach of good digestion.

Good nature is, for the most part, among the young a matter of *temperament*. Bilious temperaments are not apt to be cheerful. They are grave and stern—or sad. Nervous temperaments are not equable. They are excessively happy or intensely unhappy. They are quick for joy and as quick for sorrow. A man of nervous temperament, in good health, in prosperous condition, in peaceful circumstances, may be cheerful and good-natured. But excitements and disappointments go hard with him. There are some men whose nerves seem not to have been covered up. They lie out to the weather.

But phlegmatic persons are good-natured from a want of sensibility. They are not affected by troubles because they live under bomb-proof roofs.

The sanguine temperament affords the genuine good-natured disposition. Here it is natural. Everything conspires to produce cheerfulness, hopefulness, and ardor of sentiment.

But, while good-nature, in youth, is largely a matter of nice Organization, it becomes, in age, a result of Will and of Habit. Many men are drilled to it by their experience. Some come to it by the force of religious motives. And some because, in the decay of forces, many of the unruly or discordant elements of their nature are weakened and subordinated.

But, however it may come, or upon whatever terms it may exist, how blessed are good-natured people! They only, of almost all mankind, have invariable good luck. They convert trouble into amusement. Or they meet it with such cheer that its power is broken.

Good nature disarms enmity, allays irritation, stops even the garrulity of fault-finding. It more than half overcomes envy. A real good-natured man is the most troublesome morsel that the malign passions ever attempt to feed upon. He is the natural superior of irritable persons. He that can govern himself can control others. An irritable man, whom any one can excite, is like a horse kept at livery, rode by every one, and spurred by each rider. Nobody is so little his own master as he who can be stirred and provoked at another's will. Anybody can eject him from his castle.

There is high eulogy pronounced in Sacred Writ upon good-natured men, for such I take to be the meaning of the passage in Proverbs: "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*" It is harder to keep your temper than to take a city! It shows more skill, foresight, courage and good engineering, especially in their cases who are naturally irritable. They have to provide before hand, to make battle against subtle enemies, and often under desperate conditions. But it is worth all it costs.

Ought there not to be associations for the promotion of *good nature?* Ought not premiums and testimonials to be given? No branch of education stands more in need of culture. None will be, at once, so much of utility and accomplishment together! And if some movement can be made, will *you* consent to preside at some meeting for such a purpose? In the earlier meeting, none but men of known good-nature should be called together. Atrabilious reformers would ruin us. No man who cannot keep a smile on his face as long as the dew rests on clover in a cloudy summer morning, ought to be entrusted with making the constitution and by-laws. After we have secured a proper organization thus, we might admit others to our good-natured influences. Something ought to be done.

There are a great many cross men about now-a-days. People are fault-finding. Indeed, I have been grumbled at myself. Can anything more be needed to show the need of reformatory measures?

A NEW KIND OF BEGGING LETTER.

A London paper, which has been showing up the begging-letter nuisance lately, prints the following, among other specimens:

Friday Evening.

I suppose I ought to begin with a whole string of apologies for writing to you at all (and I really am ashamed of myself), but I am sure you will prefer my "coming to the point" at once. The fact is, then, that, although we are tolerably respectable people (Papa is a collector), I never had a silk dress in my life; that I have set my heart on having one, which will cost four pounds, and that I have written to you to ask you to give me the four pounds. There, I dare say you think I am mad, but I am not. I have been hearing so much of you lately, of your wealth, of your kindness; some one told me that you never refused money for *charitable* purposes, and oh! it would be *really* charity to give me what I ask. Only fancy, a girl, tolerably good looking, and eighteen years old, not possessing, and never having possessed, a silk dress! fancy your wife (I heard you were married), fancy your daughters (if you have any), think what *they* would feel if they had not one! Most likely you will say there is no comparison between us, and perhaps there may not be; but, remember it is *one* silk dress *I* wish for, while, of course, *they* have *no end*. If you are as rich as people say, four pounds cannot be as much to you as four *pence* are to me, and I am sure I would give that to make any one happy; and *I* am *not* good, whilst *every one* says *you are*. I know it would be perfect madness to write to any one else, as I have written to you; but how *can* I despair when I think of your name? I have not sent my own name and address, for I felt so dreadfully ashamed; but if you really wish to know it I will send it. Hoping, or rather *wishing*, you may grant my request,

I am, yours most respectfully, A. H.

Post Office, Camden Town.

This will do. We have received some rather funny begging-letters ourselves, but the author of the above "takes down" all competitors in this profitable line of business.

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Pine Plains, *Jan. 16th*, 1861.

Robert Bonner, Esq.—*Dear Sir*:—I accompanied a young lady to a party a short time since, and as she did not dance, I left her in company with a gentleman friend of mine while I danced. As tea was announced, I stepped to take her arm, but she was engaged to him, and I was obliged to seek another partner. Did she do right? By answering this, you will oblige

Your obedient servant, F. W. D.

Yes, she served you just right. If you attempt two strings to your bow, one is very likely to break. You should strive hard to imitate the wisdom of Solomon, but not his vices. It has been as much as one man could do, since the days of Adam down to this day, to merit the devotion of one woman. As one of our most illustrious statesmen once remarked: "I have addressed thousands of men, but never more than one woman successfully."

COLLEGE COURTESY.

BY PROF. C. G. FORSHEY,

Superintendent of the Texas Military Institute.

"It might reasonably be expected that in the highest class of our institutions of learning, where the course is intended to qualify young men for the most exalted civil stations, the students would comport themselves like gentlemen." *Ledger Editorial, Dec. 22, 1860.*

All educators are familiar with the lamentable want of breeding in collegiate life, and some of them (not many) have set themselves rationally to work to correct the evil. The remedy is perfectly and easily accessible.

That remedy is

MILITARY DISCIPLINE IN CIVIL SCHOOLS.

Inculcation of good manners forms no necessary part of any college course. The head is taught, and often the heart attacked, if not subdued to a rational and healthy tone. But the manners are left like rank weeds to grow among the corn. It is impracticable under any civil course, or in the administration of civil discipline, to reach the habitual character for good breeding. It requires the *military element* to impart chivalry to sentiments, dignity and finish to bearing, manliness to manifestation, and energy to execution. These are elements of good breeding.

Deference to rank, to age, to sex, is inculcated until it marks the habits of the soldier, like an instinct. It is instantaneous and universal. The military salute is its external index. Four years in a garrison, or in the ranks, as a soldier—without intellectual training, *creates* this trait of deference. How much more the same period of the military, combined with intellectual training! The tree of chivalry is planted and cultivated, till, by graduation, it bears its legitimate fruit—good manners—lofty character.

The *traditions* of college life are pernicious. The first thing learned by the youth entering upon it, is the history of adventurous students, whose exploits, depredations, and escapes—or ultimate expulsion, have rendered them famous in college tradition, and perhaps prepared them for notoriety rather than fame in civil life. Devilment has a spice of romance in the eye of a college boy or youth, and its heroism sounds like fame, where the numbers* are great enough to form a sort of community.

Exploits are performed in the concealment of citizen dress; and the institution is not identified with the rowdyism; nor is civil punishment, outside the institute discipline, often administered, on account of the "respectable family" to which the culprit may belong. Disgraces are merged in the semi-secresy of college annals, and the frequency of similar disgraces. The trumpet of eclat, though confined to the college walls, reverberates through subsequent years, and furnishes a sufficient temptation to risk detection, and local and so-called *temporary* disgrace. Three of every five are injured in character, and one of the three disgraced, in college records. The other two, and perhaps the unlucky one that was caught, live in college tradition; and this local tradition, this unenviable fame, is the compensation for taint or loss of character in subsequent life.

In military schools, a loftier pride is appealed to. A lie has no glory in it for a soldier,—not even though it cheat, for the time, the most unpopular professor or commander. A falsehood is a scandal to the true soldier; and the commonest rustic, or the rudest street boy, placed under military discipline, with the personal pledge of enlistment, contracts the notion that duplicity, lies, tricks in darkness, violative of the vow, are all disgraceful to the soldier, and contemptible in the eyes of commanders. The prevailing sentiment frowns it down in the few whose chivalry does not restrain them. Those expelled have little sympathy among those who remain. Under well-administered discipline, not one in twenty is expelled or dismissed; and even these are benefitted in character, for their experience of real discipline.

The uniform protects the cadet's character, by rendering all his movements notorious. The *gentleman* is expected of him. His tricks or rowdyism is a stain upon the character of his institute, and all his fellow-cadets share it. He is advertised by his buttons wherever he goes, and is thus kept upon his good behavior. In company, he is pointed out as representing the military school where gentlemen are made. In society, the ladies give him preference almost invariably because of his uniform or certificate of chivalry, deference, dignity, and good breeding.

Put your colleges under military discipline—make every youth of fourteen years old above perform the drill and the guard duty of the soldier, and you will make gentlemen of "the young men that are intended to fill the most exalted stations," whether civil or military.

* Numbers is the curse of our American colleges. The gain, in intellect and character, is in the inverse ratio of the numbers in a college, after matriculating fifteen members in each college class.

"DID SHE DO RIGHT?"

This is the question which is agitating certain people up town; and it is raised on the following basis of facts: At a social party recently given by a highly-esteemed lady, "a foreign gentleman of distinction" was waltzing with the daughter of the hostess—a beautiful girl, some nineteen years of age. The "foreign gentleman of distinction" at last waltzed into an alcove in the rear of the suite of rooms in which the company was assembled, and then suddenly kissed the young lady before she could interpose any resistance. The high-spirited girl tore herself from him, and with all her force struck "the foreign gentleman of distinction" on the mouth with her delicate hand, causing his lip to bleed. Of course, a scene followed; and after "the foreign gentleman of distinction" had retired, holding his embroidered pocket-handkerchief to his crimson mouth, the occurrence was pretty thoroughly discussed by the company; and it is still being discussed by many persons, some of whom condemn and some of whom approve the act of the young lady. For our part, we are surprised that there should be any difference of opinion as to the young lady's conduct; we think she had a right to slap the gentleman's face, if she chose to; it was the readiest way to resist the insult, if she considered it one. No woman should be "kissed against her will."

WORDS AND BLOWS.

To the Editor of the New York Ledger:—Is it right for a young man, under any circumstances, to resent an insult with a blow? This question has been freely discussed in our boarding-house; a great deal has been said on both sides; but no satisfactory conclusion arrived at. Please give us your opinion in the Ledger, and oblige A Young Man of Twenty-one.

In reply to our correspondent, we will lay down a rule which he may safely adopt: Never strike a woman. As to the propriety of striking a man, study the subject carefully.

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Chicago, Jan. 16, 1861.

Mr. Editor:—Some time ago I saw a notice in some newspaper that Queen Victoria had a son born in Ireland. I had a dispute with a friend of mine about it. She said that it was not so. Please answer in your paper, and oblige, Yours respectfully,

C. J. Simpson.

You are mistaken. Queen Victoria has plenty of Irish subjects, but no Irish son.

A POET'S WALK.

BY ALICE CARY.

Once his way a poet took
  Through a deep and dewy glen;
Write about me in your book!
  Cried the redbreast, cried the wren.

Twittering low from every bush,
  Chirping loud from every tree,
Cried the pewet, cried the thrush,
  Cried the blackbird, write of me!

Sing about my eyes, my wings—
  Mine is but a humble boon—
So they cried, the silly things,
  Crossing each the other's tune.

But the poet, sign of grace
  Giving not, by look or tone,
Turned into a shady place,
  Where a daisy lived alone.

All her modest shoulders hid
  In a veil of leaves of grass,
Dropping either snowy lid
  Sat she still to see him pass.

Then the poet, with a quill
  That some eager bird had shook
Downward, all against her will,
  Wrote about her in his book.

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MOSES ORAN;

OR,

“THE BURGLARS' NEST.”

BY GEO. CLARENCE BLANCHARD.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMING SHADOWS.

All that night Osborne tossed restlessly on his couch, thinking over the resolution he had formed, and deliberating on the wisest plan of procedure. He felt that he had a delicate task to accomplish in divulging the secret to his master, involving, perhaps, his own safety and future reputation, but he was not the one to shrink from an undertaking for mere personal considerations. An opportunity of entangling the burglars in their own toils presented itself, and if managed with skill and dexterity, little doubt existed in his mind that the whole party might be safely captured and handed over to justice. To disclose the plot at once would be both impolitic and inexpedient. It must be gradually and carefully unfolded, and a systematic movement made to thwart and entrap the ruffians. Thus judged the cool, calculating youth, and thus he determined to act.

The night passed on, and as soon as the first streak of dawn struggled through his attic window, he jumped up, threw on his clothes, and proceeded to the stable to perform his duties with his characteristic energy and promptitude. This being completed, he returned to his chamber, and dressed more carefully.

Stationing himself in the passage, he waited patiently for the old gentleman's appearance, and he did not wait long.

Mr. Van Cleeker came down, looking exceedingly stern and discomposed. It was evident that something unusual had occurred.

“May I speak with you, sir, in private? I have something very important to communicate,” said Osborne, with an air of mystery that surprised and puzzled Mr. Van Cleeker.

“Something important to communicate to *me!* pray sir,” inquired the astonished old gentleman, “what is it? tell it here!”

“I should prefer,” replied Osborne, modestly, “to see you alone.”

“Pray sir,” said Mr. Van Cleeker, confounded at what he conceived to be the familiarity of his new coachman, “are we not alone? Speak quick, for I have no time to waste.”

“It is a secret,” rejoined Osborne, earnestly, “which I am most anxious to reveal to you, but which I cannot——”

“A secret,” interrupted Mr. Van Cleeker, in a hot passion, “how dare you, sir, come to me with secrets. I abominate secrets,” and the old gentleman pushed by the disconcerted youth and returned to his chamber.

This was rather discouraging for a beginning, and Osborne stood some moments in the passage chafed and mortified by the unexpected repulse. There was no use in saying anything further to him that morning, for it was evident he was in no humor to listen.

While considering the propriety of imparting the secret to his young mistress, he perceived Mrs. Platt coming down the stairs with an unusually serious and troubled face.

“Good morning, ma'm,” said Osborne, pleasantly, “you look unwell.”

“Yes, James—I mean Jerry—I don't, to tell the truth, feel in my usual spirits. Brother is very unreasonable, and I left poor Fanny a crying, and I am sure I feel like crying myself.”

Osborne ventured to inquire what had happened.

“Why, you see,” pursued Mrs. Platt, “your mistress is too young to marry, and it isn't but a few months since she came from boarding school, and now brother—which is very contrary in him to be sure—wishes her to have a man whom she hates, and I am sure I don't blame her, for I always was opposed to young girls marrying men old enough to be their grandpapa's, and, when I come to think of it, the ancient's never did any such thing.”

Poor Mrs Platt having concluded this incoherent speech, burst into tears.

“I am sure,” continued she, wiping her eyes, “Fanny has always been so obedient and patient, watching her father, and bearing all his tantrums, and now, when she takes it into her head, to have her own mind, he's so very mad, and I am sure, if Mr. Tarleton was a gentleman, as he pretends to be, he wouldn't force the matter.”

“Humph!” thought our hero, “that fellow is then engaged to this lovely girl.”

In spite of his anxiety to divulge the Tomtit's plot, he felt a keen desire to see more of the lawyer, and discover his purposes.

“She does not like him then,” he observed.

“No, indeed,” replied Mrs. Platt, “she hates him, though I must say he's not an ugly man, and has very agreeable manners. For my own part I don't see what old men want to be racing after the girls for, when there is plenty of their own age who would be glad to have them.”

Mrs. Platt would have probably imparted further news, but remembering, just at this moment, that she was making too great a confidant of Osborne, and that he was only a coachman, she paused abruptly, and hurried down to the kitchen, to busy herself as usual.

Meanwhile Osborne gave way to deep and earnest meditation. That his services had been selected by Tarleton for some base purpose of his own, he had already divined. The hot blood rushed to the youth's face at the bare idea of aiding him, even indirectly; his proud spirit, that had been slumbering so long, now rose up and rebuked him. Had Mr. Tarleton showed himself at that moment, he would have probably received a greeting from his employee of a very unexpected and startling nature; but luckily for Osborne's own plans, that gentleman was out of the reach of his young and vigorous arm, and when our hero had somewhat recovered from his indignation, he plainly saw the necessity of veiling his real character, and for the present affecting to play into the lawyer's hands.

While Osborne was thus thinking, and determining in his own mind to postpone the announcement of the contemplated robbery till he had ascertained the real designs of Tarleton, he was surprised to hear Mr. Van Cleeker's voice calling him.

“Here, sir!” responded Osborne.

“Get the coach ready, you rascal!” shouted the old gentleman, “in a half hour's time. Do you hear?”

“Aye, sir,” replied Osborne.

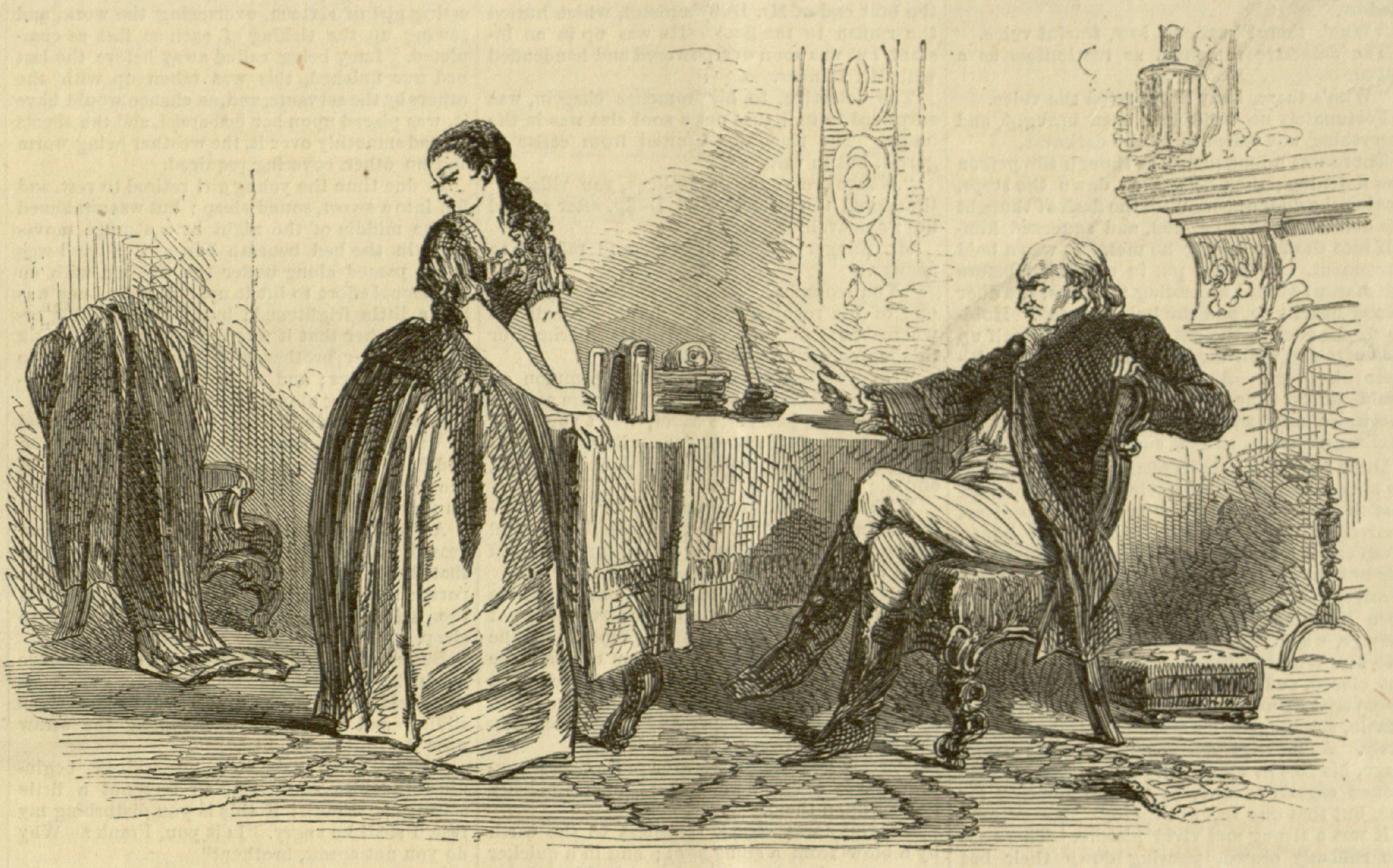
He hurried down stairs and communicated the order to Mrs. Platt, who declared the movement to be unparalleled, unprecedented and extraordinary.

With the assistance of Clem, the coach was got ready and the horses harnessed. The spirited animals, that had been accustomed of late only to be driven out at particular intervals for exercise, were exceedingly restive. Clem expressed some solicitude that our hero might find difficulty in controlling them, and proposed he should make a trial trip up the street.

This was done, much to the gratification of the old negro, who averred he drove them almost as cleverly as himself.

Mrs. Platt now called him in the house, and informed him that he must don the livery of the Van Cleekers. The good lady had fished out, from the wardrobe of his cashiered predecessor, a complete suit, gold hat-band and all, and notwithstanding the great disparity of size, she insisted upon his wearing them forthwith. When Osborne was duly arrayed, and returned to the kitchen to show himself, Mrs. Platt fairly lifted up her hands in silent horror.

The clothes of the luckless James were altogether too large for his youthful successor; the big caped coat threatened to swallow him, and the gold-laced hat persisted in slipping over his eyes, to the great consternation of the old lady, and the manifest enjoyment of Osborne, who laughed very heartily at the comical figure he cut. After much fuming, fretting and deliberation, Mrs. Platt finally found a blue frock that became our hero very well. Nancy was sent out for a beaver, the gold lace taken off and transferred to the new one, and in a brief period he was ready.



A CRUEL SACRIFICE.

Our hero, in his new suit, looked, certainly, less like a coachman than ever. Mrs. Platt herself could hardly repress an involuntary exclamation of surprise and admiration. She of course attributed the transformation to her own taste and management.

“There, Jerry, you may thank me for this,” said the good lady; “and I am sure no one would ever dream you was a coachman, would they, Nancy?”

“No, mem, that indeed they wouldn't; he looks just like a gentleman,” said the domestic.

He did look like a gentleman, and had Mr. Job Tarleton seen him at that moment, with his graceful figure and handsome face, he would have discovered at once that he had committed a great blunder The Tomtit's precautionary sagacity had made him just passable to the lawyer; but to resume.

Behold our hero in his livery letting down the steps of the carriage, a fashion, by-the-by, that has long since fallen into disuse. The front door opens, and the old gentleman appears on the threshold. Osborne's heart beats tumultuously, for he is not alone, but close behind him peers forth a little cottage bonnet, and a dainty form that he knows too well. Fanny's veil was drawn closely over her face, yet it was easy to see that she had been laboring under some mental excitement. Her father gently placed her inside, and then got in himself; a few hasty directions, the steps rolled up, and Osborne sprang to the box. The restive horses pranced and curveted, but Osborne, inspired by the thought of the precious burden, guided them with unrivalled skill, and never did a coachman acquit himself so well. Clem would have been in positive raptures with his pupil. Away wheeled the equipage up Chestnut street, the passers-by staring at the handsome young driver, and nodding their heads in surprise to recognize the Van Cleeker coach once more moving on a public thoroughfare.

Meanwhile Osborne, in high spirits, drove along, winking slyly at all the pretty shop girls, and creating a deal of observation from his (cab and omnibus) cotemporaries, who were lost in admiration of his expert driving.

The coach stopped before a fashionable dry-goods store, and Osborne had the proud satisfaction of unrolling the steps for the little maiden. He watched, in a sort of breathless ecstacy, her sylph-like descent, and followed her with enraptured eyes till she entered the store, accompanied by Mr. Van Cleeker.

It was something very extraordinary to see the old gentleman abroad. He had been so long closeted and imprisoned in his big house, that people had begun to regard him as a sort of recluse, or hermit. The moment he was fairly in the store, a whisper passed amongst the clerks, and several sprang forward to have the honor of waiting on him. Fanny raised her veil; her sweet face was tinged with a deep melancholy; but no matter what expression lurked in her features, whether grief, joy or mirth, whether sunshine or tears, it was always surpassingly lovely. The fortunate clerk who had the felicity of waiting on her was lost in speechless admiration, and for the nonce forgot his professional glibness of tongue, handing down black satins when she asked for white ones, and committing all sorts of blunders. Fanny Van Cleeker was too absorbed in her own feelings to notice the sensation she created. She was asking, in a tremulous voice, the price of a silk which the officious salesman had displayed before her, when a handsomely dressed lady of fine, haughty exterior, touched her on the shoulder familiarly.

“Why, Fanny Van Cleeker, how *you have* grown!” exclaimed the lady; “don't you recollect me?”

“My dear,” said her father, turning to her with an explanatory look, “this is our old friend, Mrs. Beagles.”

Fanny courtesied, and looked surprised. She had never seen the lady before.

“My dear Fanny, how long *have* you been home? I'm sure you ought to have come and seen us; and you, Mr. Van Cleeker, I haven't seen you for an age.”

“Tell Mrs. Beagles,” returned Mr. Van Cleeker, smiling, “that your father has been selfish to keep you to himself.”

“Mr. Van Cleeker, what a shame to debar Fanny from society! I forgot that you have set your face against it,” added Mrs. Beagles, laughing.

“Fanny is not too young to go in society, I know,” observed Mr. Van Cleeker, coloring.

“Not by any means,” replied Mrs. Beagles; “and I am surprised you should make a little nun of her. I am truly surprised at your shocking selfishness. Here, Clara,”—she beckoned to a fashionably dressed young lady of twenty years, who was standing at one end of the saloon—“come here.”

Miss Clara Beagles tripped towards them, inquiringly.

“Fanny, this is my daughter,” said Mrs. Beagles. “I hope you will be good friends.”

Miss Clara Beagles smiled and courtesied, and forthwith commenced a long strain of fashionable nonsense, with a freedom and ease that took the little maiden completely by surprise.

“Miss Fanny, what have you been purchasing?” said Miss Beagles, holding up the white satin which the clerk had just measured out. “Are you going to a ball, or are you about to be married?”

Fanny blushed, and looked agitated.

“Oh, now, I do believe!” said Miss Clara, lifting up her pearl tinted glove with an arch playful air: “I do believe you are going to be married! Your face has a tell-tale expression! You can't deceive me!”

“Well, you must *think so*, then,” said Fanny, with a slight smile, endeavoring to look composed.

“It's either a ball or a marriage, one or the other,” returned Miss Beagles. “I'm so glad to know you, because we are just on the eve of having a ball ourselves; and you must come, of course; and, Miss Fanny, we intend to have it *very select*, none but the very genteelest. Do you know,” said she, lowering her voice, “that some horrid people have actually been barefaced enough to tell papa he ought not to have it, because times are hard?”

“Indeed,” replied Fanny, who being relieved now that the subject was changed, counterfeited a degree of interest she was far from feeling.

“Yes, it's even so,” replied Miss Beagles, curling her lip scornfully. “It's all jealousy. How absurd! hard times, when we have everything we want. Don't you think it looks very impertinent in people to be interfering? Mr. Tarleton thinks so, and——”

“Mr. Tarleton!” repeated Fanny, involuntarily.

“Yes, do *you* know him?” returned Clara, with a look of surprise, for she observed that the little maiden's face paled, and her eyes dropped.

“I have seen him—that is——” returned the little maiden. She paused in such evident confusion that, had Miss Beagles possessed the slightest degree of penetration, she must have understood her at once.

“I wish you knew him, he's such a beau,” continued Miss Beagles. “He's a positive flirt, too, and just now he is paying marked attention to widow Eustice. I don't see how he can like her—horrid creature! full of falsities!”

“Clara!” called her mother, who had just finished chatting with Mr. Van Cleeker, and was moving towards the door.

“Yes, Ma. Good-bye, dear Fanny; you must certainly come and see me.” Miss Beagles ran off, and in a few moments had forgotten that such a person as Fanny Van Cleeker ever existed. Such is fashionable society.

The little maiden meanwhile thought over in her mind what Miss Clara Beagles had communicated. Tarleton's selfish and trifling character was more apparent than ever. She truly abhorred him.

“Cruel father!” she inwardly exclaimed, as she returned to her carriage, “to what straits has he reduced his only daughter. But she will not submit—no, never!” She clenched her little hands with stern determination. Mr. Van Cleeker sat silently gazing out of the window. He felt more cheerful than usual, partly because he conceived from Fanny's very apathy she was already growing more reconciled, and partly enjoying the thought that the match was hastening.

“The marriage,” thought he, “can be quietly consummated, and the two slip off to Europe. It will be a nine days' wonder, and then——” The old gentleman rubbed his hands.

“Fanny, my dear,” said he, “Mrs. Beagles is about to give a grand ball.”

“So her daughter said,” returned Fanny, carelessly.

“Mrs. Beagles has extended to us a most cordial invitation. How would you like to go, my dear?”

Fanny shook her head: “I am sure I do not wish to.”

Mr. Van Cleeker frowned.

“You shall go, Miss Obstinate!”

“I will not, unless, I please!” replied the little maiden, flushing up.

“Why, you little minx, what is in that perverse head of yours now?”

“Mr. Tarleton will be there; and after his insulting behavior——”

“*There*, Fanny, say no more!” Mr. Van Cleeker's face turned pale with anger. “After all last evening's conversation you still persist, foolish girl! you know not what you say, in the face of purchasing your bridal dress——”

“I was forced to do it, but Heaven——”

“Forced to it!” repeated Mr. Van Cleeker, sternly; “and so you shall be forced to the altar, likewise. I am out of patience, and will bear your whims and caprice no longer.”

The coach had now arrived at the Van Cleeker House. The old gentleman flung himself angrily out and bolted into the house, leaving his daughter to follow as best she could.

Osborne impulsively sprang forward and assisted her to alight. He performed the office so gently, so tenderly, so respectfully, that Fanny could not refrain from giving him one of her sweet smiles in acknowledgment. Poor Osborne! that smile seemed to him more precious than all the wealth of the Indies. It bewildered him so he could hardly guide his horses to the stable, and he came near running into a cab in his wild confusion.

Clem was at loss to account for the backwardness of his pupil that day. Our hero blundered in everything; and no wonder, when one little nymph in brown challis, and cottage hat, was continually before his eyes, bewitching him with that smile. Alas! is it not strange that mere flesh and blood can exert such power, charming us from ourselves when we know its vanity. This lovely piece of fragile clay! this angelic transitory form! ah! how they sway our passion and our judgment, cloud or sunshine our earthly pilgrimage!

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO INTERVIEWS.

When Fanny Van Cleeker's little feet had reached her father's chamber she found him standing by the fire with his arms folded. He gazed sternly and fixedly on her as she came in, but said not one word.

She had changed so in the past few days that he scarcely knew her; once all meek submissiveness, now all haughty defiance; he could not understand why she was so fixed and resolute in her aversion to Mr. Tarleton—he could not comprehend the workings of a female heart, deep and unfathomable as it ever is to probe, now that something else than mere prejudice had entered there.

Fanny took off her bonnet, and smoothing her raven tresses, cast one of her demure little looks askance on her father; but the charm was gone, the fascination of those bright eyes no longer conjured up a sympathetic smile; his features relaxed not their stern, marble-like expression, and when she playfully put her arm around his neck, he coldly released himself and half pushed her aside.

The haughty little eyes filled with tears.

“How you treat me,” she murmured.

“No more than you deserve, perverse girl,” replied Mr. Van Cleeker, severely. “I want no hypocritical endearments, I am tired of them. If you really loved me, really entertained the affection you pretend to feel, you would not thwart my darling wishes; but marry him you *shall*, and as I told you last evening so now I tell you again, that nothing can prevent it. Foolish girl, you would ruin your father. You will not believe it, for you little understand my postion.”

“Alas! I do not,” rejoined Miss Van Cleeker, “something surely very grave must have forced you to a step so unkind, so hasty and unnatural. Mr. Tarleton possesses some influence which I am ignorant of, and yet it must be a wicked power or else it would not force you to sacrifice your daughter's happiness.”

“Sacrifice your happiness!” repeated Mr. Van Cleeker; “foolish girl, you little know how much your happiness depends upon it. What if I should tell you something new. You can be as haughty as you please. That pride and obstinacy might set well if you were as independent as you think, but know, girl, this, “*your father is a beggar!*”

Fanny covered her face with her hands.

“Yes,” continued Mr. Van Cleeker, “your unfortunate parent owns not a single inch of ground. This very house, the furniture, even the smallest trifle belongs to Tarleton; the carriage that you stepped from this moment, the horses, the coachman, all are his, and I have nothing.” The old gentleman paused in some inward shame, for he remembered his chest of gold.

“At any moment,” resumed Mr. Van Cleeker, “I may be thrust out—by courtesy only am I permitted to remain.”

The poor little heiress of the Van Cleeker House—heiress no longer—was thunderstruck by this announcement. She had long since divined that Mr. Tarleton had claims on her father, but she never dreamt of the extent of his indebtedness. It was a terrible thought to her that her own home, the home of her childhood, endeared to her by a thousand associations, was in the possession of that man, and he of all others.

“I knew this would surprise and shock you,” pursued Mr. Van Cleeker, “but it is nevertheless true. When very young I was led into a ruinous speculation, and what property I then saved was mortgaged. Mr. Tarleton lent me money. The interest accumulated. I was unable to pay it, and our mansion passed into his hands, yet, as you see, unknown to the world; for Mr. Tarleton, with unexampled kindness, spared me the mortification of an exposure, kindly consented to my retaining the old homestead, and has likewise, what I value more, preserved my honor untarnished. All he asks, all he desires, is your hand in honorable marriage, and you reject it with contempt, and because your foolish whims have prejudiced you against this most estimable man, you are ready to sacrifice your father, steep him in poverty, degrade the name of the Van Cleeker family, which for years has been fair and unsullied—all this you would do.”

Mr. Van Cleeker clenched his hands and paced the room excitedly, then he paused again and resumed:

“Yes, girl, you who pretend to love your father in reality care nothing for him; even now you would see him pushed out of doors, a homeless wanderer, a——”

She would not hear him further, but silently laid her head on his shoulder. There was so much eloquent meaning, so much humble resignation in that simple movement, that her father forgot his anger and impulsively kissed her.

“My dear Fanny do you hesitate longer?”

She meekly looked up.

That look was enough.

Mr. Van Cleeker had never felt more truly miserable than at that moment, the thought that he was precipitating his daughter in an alliance to which she was so averse was endurable while she manifested a disposition of resistance, but now that she was all submission, his proud spirit was touched with remorse.

O, selfish spirit of interest! how many tears have been shed because of thee! How many years of hopeless misery have been dragged out to satisfy the longings of thy insatiable avarice! How many beautiful spirits have faded away in thy passionless embrace!

Fanny Van Cleeker was now resigned, or thought she was, to her inevitable destiny.

Mr. Van Cleeker looked happy again, and it was some consolation to his daughter, at least, to know that she had driven the cloud from his brow.

“My dear girl,” observed he, “all the programme of the marriage has been arranged. It will be as private as possible; in a fortnight's time it must come off.”

Fanny shuddered. So soon!

“I do not wish to be precipitate, my dear, but Mr. Tarleton is exceedingly anxious that it should take place at as early a day as possible. I am sure we won't oppose his wishes in that respect.”

Fanny sighed. She remembered that she had as yet had but two interviews with him, and these not of the most pleasing nature.

Just at that moment Nancy entered with two cards, which she handed to the old gentleman.

Her father glanced at them, and then tossed them to his daughter. They were cards of invitation to Mrs. Beagle's grand ball, which was announced to come off the following Friday evening.

Fanny looked at them listlessly.

“Do you intend to go?” inquired he.

“If it is your desire,” returned Fanny.

“It is my desire,” replied he. “I think, Fanny, I have moped you long enough in this dismal chamber. You must see a little of society. This ball will be something new, and I know you will be pleased; but for the present let us dismiss the subject. I wish to take a nap now, so you can go down and see your aunt Susan, and mind, child, not a word of what I have told you. She need never know it.”

When Fanny retired from his presence, her reflections may be easily conceived. Naturally warm-hearted and affectionate, she had impulsively given her tacit consent to wed a man whom she felt that she could never love. She thought, too, of the indecent haste with which she was to be hurried into this alliance. Tarleton must have some sinister motive.

She strolled into the parlor, and stood by the grate, musing over the disclosures. As she thought of her last interview with him, her cheeks flushed and her lip curled. How pretty the little witch looked at that instant.

In the earnestness of her thought, she did not notice that a figure had glided in.

“Miss Van Cleeker,” said a low voice.

Fanny raised her head, with a faint exclamation of surprise. It was Osborne.

“I am—that is, I am afraid I have taken too great a liberty,” stammered the youth, holding out a glove. “I found this in the carriage, and knew it must be yours.”

“It is mine,” returned Fanny, in a tone of sweet sadness that thrilled through the heart of Osborne. “I'm sorry to give you the trouble, Jerry.”

Sorry to give him the trouble! Poor fellow! he would have felt himself too happy to have brought up a thousand gloves to such a peerless little maiden. And she, in turn, could not help regarding him with strange interest. He was so unlike a servant, so unlike his rough predecessor, standing before her (with such a modest air), so handsome, and those blue eyes so expressive and intelligent!

The thought flashed across his mind that now was a good opportunity of revealing the contemplated plot of the Tomtit. He felt that he ought to delay it no longer.

She noticed that he paused, and her cheek slightly flushed.

“Do you wish to say anything, Jerry?”

“Young lady,” replied Osborne, in a tone and manner so different that Fanny involuntarily started, “I do wish to say something further. I have a secret to disclose, intended for your father's ears, but he would not hear it. Oh, listen to it, for it concerns you all.”

“Jerry, what can you mean?”

Fanny's cheeks grew pale.

“Call me not Jerry,” returned Osborne, with vehement earnestness; “'tis no name of mine. Sweet young lady, think me not a menial because I'm here. Humble as I am, I never was a servant; oh, believe me.”

The astonished little maiden gazed at him in speechless wonder.

“Chance led me here,” continued Osborne, “only to be the instrument of retribution. You do not know what danger lurks over your father's house. You little dream——”

“Danger!” repeated Fanny.

“Aye, *danger*. You little dream that the very one who stands before you now was introduced by cunning artifice to further and abet the monstrous purposes of evil men.”

“Oh, what can you mean?”

“Simply this,” rejoined Osborne, calmly.

"I was placed in this house by a band of organized ruffians bent on plunder, and perhaps murder. You shudder, but it is even so. *Stay*, my young lady. Do not be alarmed. I am not one of them."

Frightened and amazed at what she heard, Fanny was about to leave the room, but he caught her by the hand, and gently and respectfully detained her.

"Stay," he said; "listen but a moment, I implore you."

He looked so entreatingly in her sweet face, that she had not the heart to refuse him, but lingered half fearfully.

In a low and earnest tone, Osborne told her everything—told her of his first coming to the city, of being drawn into the Burglars' Nest, his adventures and escapes, his interview with Mr. Tarleton, hiding nothing from her, and when he had finished, the little maiden buried her face in her handkerchief to hide her varied emotions.

The mention of Mr. Tarleton, the base purposes of employing a new coachman, the chest of gold, exposing at once the lawyer's baseness and the selfishness of her own father, were startling and bewildering truths. And this young man, no longer a servant, had known everything; and now he was about to risk his life to save them from the scheming villains. How grateful she felt!

"Oh, this seems hard to believe," exclaimed Fanny, "and yet I know you would not deceive me."

"Young lady, every word is solemn truth!"

"How did this bad man you speak of find out father had money?" said Fanny, with a shudder.

"That is more than I can say, for he discovers things that others never dream of. If you disbelieve me, slip in your father's closet, push away the rubbish, and you will see a big iron chest. That is the object of the Burglars' coming visit."

Fanny wrung her hands in speechless agony. It was terrible news to her to learn of her father's deception.

"Cruel father!" she exclaimed, involuntarily, "to sacrifice me thus. I never shall be forced into this unholy marriage."

"And I will help you to perform that vow," said Osborne, enthusiastically.

Her face and neck suffused with a deep crimson.

"I have offended you," he said, sadly.

"Offended me? oh no, you've not offended me," replied Fanny, earnestly. She paused and blushed again at her own vehemence. "You who know the villainy of this man can understand how I abhor and hate him."

"It is but natural you should," returned Osborne; "his employing me shows a subtle purpose. Keep this matter I have revealed a secret for a day at least, till I can sift his scheme. Even your father must not know. Promise me this?"

"I promise," said Fanny.

"It is best to do so," rejoined Osborne, "as you will presently see. Not only the Burglars but this wily lawyer must be insnared. He has, I suspect, some sinister aim in forcing you to marry him. I will save you if I can. I know I can."

Osborne's eye kindled with romantic enthusiasm. Here was a beautiful girl, whom he had almost worshipped, willing to trust to him. The thought that she had promised secresy thrilled him with ecstasy. He never felt prouder. He was anxious to show her that her confidence was not misplaced.

One hour's conversation had drawn them together by a sympathetic link, and they knew it not. Fanny looked upon Osborne as she would upon a brother. Smile not, gentle reader. Fanny was but a child; as yet she hardly knew herself.

The interview was now brought to a close by the door-bell ringing. Osborne, after obtaining a promise that she would see him again that evening, passed out, his heart beating with a glad, exultant throb.

Full of the resolution to dissect the motives and purposes of Mr. Tarleton, he started off to that gentleman's office; after having changed his dress, and made a few alterations necessary to keep up the consistency of the character he had assumed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DISCOVERY AND ITS RESULT.

Evening had thrown its mantle over the city of Philadelphia, and hushed the tramp and roar of busy excitement. Another day had passed of incident and bustle, and the weary actors in life's drama had retired to their couches, to refresh themselves with a brief interval of repose.

The cold, silent, deserted streets; the hundreds of buildings standing up in their gaunt, shadowy outlines; the sky, with its myriad of twinkling stars looking down on the sleeping city, is the same old scene we have viewed so often. But though all the world seems lost in slumber, there are unquiet spirits wandering about, or pacing restlessly to and fro, to whom sleep has no charms,—worried with some absorbing care or wild, distracting grief; tortured with thoughts that whirl in their brain, and madden them to restless, perpetual motion.

Muffled in a cloak, his face concealed from observation by a slouched hat, Mr. Detective Duffy stood by the corner of an alley, in an attitude of patient watchfulness.

It may be well to explain why our old acquaintance was standing there at the witching hour of midnight.

Since his luckless search after the Burglars' Nest, he had been constantly on the lookout, keeping up a systematic plan of action, with the hope of obtaining some clue that might unravel this mystery of years.

The detective police system was then in its infancy, but it may well be doubted whether the present efficient corps could have done any better than Duffy. Persevering and untiring, he never relaxed in his efforts. There was something more than mere duty or zeal to nerve him on. To all who knew him, he appeared a strange, inexplicable being, whose restless, fierce desire to find out the Burglars' Nest had grown to be a wild monomania.

Day after day, night after night, his watchings and vigils were kept up, till tired nature compelled him to desist from sheer exhaustion. In the firm belief that the Tomtit's gang had a rendezvous in the city, he would steal around disguised, and mix with the lowest and most depraved, but in vain. His artifices and stratagems were all baffled by the cunning precautions of the burglar

The evening previous an incident had occurred which gave a new impulse to his endeavors, and animated him with fresh hopes.

While passing up Vine street, a person accidentally ran violently against him; the man cursed him and passed on, but not before the detetive had recognized him as one of the villains whom he had seen through the crevice of the wall on the eventful evening of his sojourn at the Burglars' Nest. There was no mistaking those shaggy eyebrows and catlike eye. He dogged his steps, and saw him enter a small house fronting on an alley. He did not re-appear, and the detective made up his mind to come round the following evening and examine the premises. There was nothing very suspicious about the house itself, but the man, he was certain, belonged to the Tomtit's gang.

Mr. Detective Duffy had been standing in the same pasition for nearly two hours. The night was bitter cold, but he felt it not. Confident that he had at last obtained a clue, he resolutely determined to pursue it with indefatigable ardor. There was no light about the house, and apparently its inmates were sound asleep. Everything was unusually quiet.

The watchman was crying the hour of midnight as the detective moved from his position and advanced to the steps. He listened and fancied he heard voices; he listened again, and all doubts vanished.

Hesitating no longer, he mounted them, but just at the top his foot slipped, and he fell with a lumbering sound against the door. Before he had time to retreat, it was suddenly opened, and grasping his pistols, he shrank back into the shadow.

"Who's there?" called a low, fearful voice.

The detective remained as motionless as a statue.

"Who's there, *I say*?" repeated the voice.

Fortunately no light had been brought, and everything was veiled in pitchy darkness.

There was a long pause, as though the person was listening; then he walked down the steps, leaving the door open. With the flash of thought the detective softly entered, and squeezed himself into the first corner he met. It was a bold movement, and hardly put in execution before the man was heard ascending the steps, the door swung heavily to, and the bolt fastened. Holding in his breath, the detective drew himself up closer to the wall, expecting nothing but ultimate discovery. As the man approached, he could almost fancy he felt his breath fan his cheek, so near was he to him. A moment of anxious suspense, and he soon passed.

Duffy waited till his retreating footsteps could no longer be heard, and having satisfied himself that the coast was clear, he proceeded to divest himself of his cloak, and haul off his boots. From the sound of many voices, he believed he was not far off from them, and grasping his two revolvers, he stole in on tip-toe, and pushed open the door. He found himself in a small passage, which, as the reader will recollect, led into Mr. Winker's bar-room. The entrance was not closed, and as the detective peeped in he discovered a group of cut-throats gathered round a table, smoking, drinking, and talking vociferously. As he surveyed the unconscious assemblage, his face lit up with joyful exultation. He looked eagerly around, as though hunting for one, but that one was not there.

It was a strong and vivid picture. There sat the ruffianly crowd, pouring down their hot liquor, and puffing out clouds of smoke from their cigars, that wreathed and twisted in fantastic forms around their coarse, brutal features. And there the stalwart form of the detective, leaning forward on tip-toe, with each hand grasping a revolver, and his face expressing an almost fiendish joy.

"Winker, did you look round arter you got out?" growled Mr. Snag, who had his legs elevated on the table, and his hands thrust in his pockets.

"Yes, I did, Mister Snag, and nary thing could I see."

"Rot me, if I didn't hear something. Didn't you, Slinger?" rejoined Mr. Snag.

"Vell, I think I did," rejoined that gentleman, who was indulging in the luxury of smoking with his eyes shut. "Vot did it sound like?"

"Wot did it sound like?" repeated Mr. Snag. "Why, it sounded as though somebody was trying to get in."

"Vell, it don't signify much," observed Mr. Slinger, indifferently; "there isn't nobody going to do vot can't be done. Maybe it vos the Tomtit. I've knowed him to come and vake us all up, and then, afore any could let him in, he'd trot off vithout saying bandy."

"Vere's the Tomtit been all day?" inquired Mr. Molecat.

"Vere 'as he been?" repeated Mr. Slinger, "vy I suppose he ought to know that 'imself. I never bother my 'ed vot the Tomtit does, as long as he fobs out the shiners."

"I wos going to remark," suggested Mr. Molecat, "that maybe he wos watching up young Pluck."

"Wot's he want to do that for, eh?" growled Mr. Snag, "aint he prime? aint he a brick?"

"Uv course he is," rejoined Mr. Slinger. "The Tomtit's werry straight for'ard, and p'r'aps has got that young 'oman in his eye."

"Wot do you mean?" queried Mr. Snag, considerably mystified.

"Vy don't yer see," said Mr. Slinger, with a cunning expression on his ugly features, "that ven a 'andsome young feller like Pluck gits vere a 'andsome young 'oman is, ten to one they don't fall in love vith each other. And his being a coachman is the werry thing, for young vimen are werry partial to coachmen."

"A werry truthful hobservation," remarked Mr. Molecat. "Vot then?"

"Vy then," pursued Mr. Slinger, "he might peach to the young 'oman. Blast me if these young whelps ar'nt the werry ones that blow on us."

"Pluck's all right," said several voices.

"May be he is, I don't say nothing agin that," returned Mr. Slinger, "but the temptations is werry strong, and 'andsome young vimen do a deal of harm sometimes."

With this sage observation, Mr. Slinger leaned back in his chair, and puffed silently at his cigar.

It is unnecessary to repeat any more of their conversation, which gradually turned upon the contemplated robbery, till the whole plot was laid bare before the detective.

Having heard all he could he crept cautiously back into the passage, slipped on his boots, and opening the door as carefully as possible, descended into the street and made his legs perform a rapid exit from the locality.

Now, it so happened, that before Mr. Winker retired that night he went as usual to take a survey of the premises, and was inexpressibly astonished to find the door unbolted, when he distinctly remembered having fastened it a few hours before. He, however, said nothing to his associates concerning the matter, but the next morning duly communicated the fact to the Tomtit. The burglar chief was as much confounded as his subordinate had been, and scarcely knew what to think of it—he had never indulged even in a momentary suspicion of the loyalty of his men, and they were too well tried and had been too long in his service to be suspected of treachery. He said nothing, however, but with his usual sagacity, determined to watch and ascertain the truth.

Meanwhile Mr. Detective Duffy returned to his lodgings, and after a long and earnest deliberation, sketched out the programme of his future course. The next evening he had an interview with the chief of police, and it was agreed upon to wait a few days before dropping upon the den of the burglars. The affair was managed with secrecy, and the detective, on a set evening, was placed in command of a dozen able-bodied men, who were instructed to obey him implicitly. The night was cloudy and well suited to the occasion. Silently they threaded the deserted streets, the detective taking the lead. Full of the hope of completely surprising the ruffians, he strode along with exultant, cheerful pace, his companions following with measured tread.

Now the detective pauses and whispers to them, and they clutch their revolvers, and with deep, excited breathing follow him into the alley and up the flight of steps.

Mr. Winker, who was sleeping in fancied security, was awakened by a rapping on the door, which to his unsuspicious ears sounded like the Tomtit's knock. Before drawing the bolt he whistled. The whistle was immediately responded to, and Winker drew back the bolt. The door was pushed open, and to his horror and consternation, in rushed a body of the police. He was incontinently seized and handcuffed.

"'Ello, vot's the row?" shouted Mr. Slinger, appearing at the end of the passage, with a lantern in one hand and a knife in the other.

The only reply he received was a blow from the butt end of Mr. Duffy's pistol, which hurled the ruffian to the floor. He was up in an instant, but was soon overpowered and handcuffed with Mr. Winker.

The detective, to his immense chagrin, was surprised to find that not a soul else was in the house. The place was hunted from cellar to garret, but in vain.

"Where are your accomplices, you villain?" thundered the disappointed Duffy, after a good hour's unavailing search.

Mr. Slinger looked dogged, and refused to answer.

"You scoundrel," said the detective, placing one of his revolvers at his head, "reveal the whereabouts of your confederates in crime, or this moment will be your last!"

"No, you don't come that 'ere gammon on me," muttered Mr. Slinger, coolly; "fire away, I haint going to peach. Vinker, don't you move your tongue for any of 'em. Bring to your mind the glorious hexample of Jack Shepherd, and die game."

With this heroic exhortation, Mr. Slinger relapsed into the most imperturbable silence, and neither threats or coaxing could force a word from either.

Duffy chafed like an enraged lion, but there was no alternative; the Tomtit had evidently got a scent of his purpose, and had prepared for the exigency. Leaving half of the men to guard the premises, the detective and the remainder took their departure. The prisoners, closely guarded, were placed between them, and they marched in this way to the nearest Station House.

Scarcely had they proceeded more than a hundred yards before a number of men suddenly rushed upon them.

Mr. Duffy was struck senseless to the earth by a blow from a slung shot; and in a quicker space than it takes us to record it, Mr. Slinger and his comrade were forcibly rescued, and triumphantly borne away.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

RATTLE-SNAKES.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

In all the wild, mountainous portions of Virginia, and especially the western part of the state—among all its rugged hills and cliffs which descend directly to some river or streamlet—as in fact we may say of the whole great Alleghanic chain—are immense dens of that fearful reptile, the rattle-snake, whose bite is so poisonous and deadly that few persons recover from it, and none, we are inclined to believe, when the fangs have once pierced a vein and the virus has been taken forward to the heart.

There are legions of stories, of narrow escapes from, and desperate adventures with these reptiles, a narration of which would fill volumes.

We remember hearing a story told some years ago—but cannot vouch for the truth of it—of an Indian in one of the Western States, who carried a rattlesnake around with him, and would allow it to bite his foot for the amusement or curiosity of any spectator who would pay the trifling sum of six cents. As soon as bit, the Indian would rub some kind of a pulpy plant over the wound, and say, with a laugh, "There, me well Injun agin," and hold himself prepared to repeat the experiment for the next customer. This was continued, to the wonderment of those who beheld it, till one day, after being struck in the usual manner by the serpent, the Indian perceived from the flow of blood that a vein had been opened, and remarked, with a sigh of resignation, "Ah, me dead Injun now!" and actually died shortly after.

A curious story is told of Colonel Charles Lewis, who fell at the head of his regiment while leading his command to the attack at the bloody battle of Point Pleasant. On one occasion, while out hunting, he was captured by a party of Indians, who wished to take him alive to their towns on the Scioto, where he could be burned for their amusement in a manner becoming a warrior of such prowess. With his feet bare, his arms pinioned behind him, and goaded onward by the knives of his captors, Lewis was compelled to travel a distance of some two hundred miles before any opportunity presented itself for his escape; and even then the chance was such as would have appeared utterly hopeless to any but a desperate man of the most undaunted courage. On passing along the verge of a precipice, some twenty feet high, he suddenly, by an almost superhuman effort, burst his cords, and leaped down the steep declivity at the risk of his neck. The Indians followed, with yells of vengeance; but being fleet of foot, Lewis kept in advance of them, till he fell over a prostrate tree into a patch of rank weeds, where, with exhausted strength, he lay, expecting every moment to be retaken. But his pursuers, not perceiving his fall, passed on in eager haste; and the poor fellow was just thanking God for his Providential escape, when the warning rattle of a deadly serpent thrilled every nerve and caused him to hold his breath. Turning his eyes, without moving his head, he to his utter horror beheld the reptile coiled within a foot of him, his head thrown back and his black eyes glistening and fixed upon him, only awaiting a single motion to give him the fatal wound. It was an eternity of torture to the brave Lewis—the few moments he was thus compelled to remain in dread suspense—till the hideous snake, believing him dead, crawled slowly over his hands and face and disappeared among the weeds. Lewis succeeded in making his escape, and afterwards declared that he was so grateful to the serpent for not striking him when his fangs were within a few inches of him, that had he been dying for food he would not have killed and eaten the generous animal.

As a man was one day walking along the bank of a stream in Virginia, at the foot of a steep hill, he observed a hard, narrow path that had been worn into the side of the acclivity; and while pausing and wondering by what animal it had been made, he was startled by a peculiar rushing, rattling sound. Looking upwards, he beheld, greatly to his surprise, a large rattlesnake in the act of sliding down this path to the water, where it stopped to drink and sun itself. This was soon followed by another and then another, till more than two hundred were wriggling and rattling on the bank of the stream. Then the foolish man thought it was his duty to go to work and kill the reptiles; and while thus engaged he was bitten more than once, and died a few hours after in great agony.

There is a plant, called, in some localities, rattlesnakes'-masterpiece, that is said to be a cure for the bite of this venomous serpent; and though, in accordance with what we have already said, we doubt its efficacy in every case, yet certain it is that there are many persons now living who say they owe their recovery, after being bitten, to an early and judicious application and use of this wonderful herb.

A lady friend of ours who resided many years in Western Virginia, has told us a very singular and thrilling story, which she vouches for as strictly authentic, the names of the parties only being changed to fictitious substitutes.

Some years ago, the wife of a farmer named Caldwell, living on a branch of the great Kanawha, set her servants to emptying all the under beds and filling them with fresh straw, which had been brought and thrown down in bundles in the door-yard—her daughter Lucy, an interesting girl of sixteen, overseeing the work, and sewing up the ticking of each as fast as completed. Lucy being called away before the last bed was finished, this was taken up with the others by the servants, and, as chance would have it, was placed upon her bed-stead, and the sheets spread smoothly over it, the weather being warm and no other covering required.

In due time the young girl retired to rest, and fell into a sweet, sound sleep; but was awakened in the middle of the night by a strange movement in the bed beneath her, as if a hand was being passed along under the ticking, with an occasional effort to lift it up. At first Lucy was not a little frightened; but it immediately occurred to her that it was the mischievous prank of a younger brother, who was much given to practical jokes; and so turning over, and purposely yawning aloud, she said:

"It will not do, Frank; I am not to be scared as easily as the superstitious negroes; so you had better betake yourself to bed for the rest of the night, and hereafter try your experiments on more timid subjects."

As with her own movement the other had ceased and all was now still, she felt convinced that her suspicion had fallen upon the right party; and no longer troubling her mind with the subject, she again composed herself to sleep.

But scarcely had she sunk into another doze when she was again aroused by a more vigorous and decided movement, followed by a curious sliding and rattling sound among the straw near the foot of the bed.

"Frank!" she said, in a sterner tone, beginning in spite of herself to feel not a little alarmed; "Frank! if this is you disturbing my rest, I shall be angry. Is it you, Frank? Why do you not speak, brother?"

To this no answer was returned; but the movement continued, and the next moment, to her utter horror, she felt something cold and clammy passing slowly over her naked feet.

It was now that every nerve of poor Lucy thrilled with the wildest terror; and instantly jerking up her feet under the outer sheet, she gave utterance to a prolonged, piercing scream, that rung through every nook and corner of the dwelling, and aroused the sleeping inmates with a fearful shock. The same instant she did this there seemed to be a quicker and heavier movement, followed by a sort of whizzing sound, and a sharp blow upon her knee, outside of the covering.

The poor girl, now nearly terrified and out of her senses, gave another piercing scream; and immediately after her frightened parents burst into the room, and several ebony faces appeared at the doorway. In one hand the father held a light, and in the other a small hatchet which he had caught up on his way hither, and the sight which now met the gaze of all was horrible in the extreme.

With eyes wild and staring, and face as white as the sheet upon which she reclined, Lucy was half supported upon one elbow; while in the centre of the bed, his dark, spotted form fearfully contrasting with the colorless linen, a huge rattlesnake lay coiled, just ready for the fatal spring.

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the horrified father, with ashy lips, as he instantly comprehended the dreadful peril of his darling child. "Do not stir, dear Lucy, for the love of God!" and with a lightning motion he struck at the reptile.

But he was too late. The eyes of poor Lucy had fallen upon the monster the same instant as his own, and heeding not the words of her father, she threw out her left hand in wild alarm, instinctively to grasp and draw the sheet more closely around her shrinking form. In that moment of exposure the snake struck, and buried his poisonous fangs in the fleshy part of the hand, between the fore-finger and thumb.

A wild, agonized scream burst simultaneously from the mother, child, and horrified servants, while the father, at the peril of his own life, dashed the monster from the bed, and literally chopped it into pieces.

"Quick, wife!" shouted Mr. Caldwell, "a basin of water and a sharp knife!—quick!—another minute may be too late!"

He caught up a towel as he spoke, tore it in half with the strength of a madman, and hurriedly bound it around the arm of the fainting girl above the elbow, so tightly as to stop the arterial circulation. Then seizing the knife, which his trembling wife had in the meantime procured, he gashed the wound in the form of a cross, plunged it into the basin of water, and rubbed it dowward vigorously, to extract the poison with the blood.

While doing this, he ordered one of the negroes to mount the fleetest horse, ride for his life to the nearest town, and fetch a physician as quick as possible. Then calling for a fresh basin of water, and getting his wife to take his place and continue the rubbing till his return, he procured a lantern, and hurried out in search of the antidotal plant.

Luckily he knew exactly where to find the herb he sought; and gathering a sufficient quantity, he flew back to the chamber of his wounded child.

But even the short time of his absence had produced a marked change for the worse. The arm had begun to swell terribly, the hand being already double its usual size, and the poor girl, moaning and groaning unconsciously, was exhibiting alarming symptoms of the spasmodic action of the poison.

Reducing a large portion of the green plant to a pulp, the anxious father bound it over the wound; and getting a strong decoction from the remainder, he succeeded in forcing some of it down the throat of his child.

When the physician arrived, a couple of hours later, he found the weeping family gathered around the bed of the poor sufferer, who, wild with delirium, was rolling, groaning, gnashing her teeth, and fiercely beating her terribly swollen arm against every object that she could reach. All had been done that could be done, however, except to renew the poultice and get some more of the decoction down the patient; and after remaining with her a couple of hours, the doctor took his leave, with only a faintly expressed belief in her final recovery.

But Lucy Caldwell did recover, after the most terrible sufferings, and, for aught we know, is still living, though the effects of the poison have never gone from her system. Annually her arm swells at a certain period, and turns the dark, spotted hue of the serpent that bit her; and what is equally strange and unaccountable, during the season when the rattlesnakes go blind, she is frequently deprived of the faculty of seeing for days together.

We have only to add in explanation, that the snake was supposed to have been in the bundle of straw when it was thrust into the ticking, and the opening not having been secured, it had crept out in the night in the manner related.

THE STEPMOTHER;

OR,

WHO'S TO WIN.

BY J. F. SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "RICHARD HOFFMAN," "STANFIELD HALL," "MINNIGREY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LIX.

> The greatest schemes that human wit can forge,
> Or bold ambition dares to put in practice,
> Depend upon our husbanding a moment,
> And the light lasting of a woman's will:
> As if the lord of nature should delight
> To hang this ponderous globe upon a hair,
> And bid it dance before a breath of wind.
> ROWE.

Death pays all earthly debts. It is not man's province to penetrate beyond the pall that shrouds the coffined clay. The dread account rests between Omnipotence and the freed spirit. We can no more weigh the justice or the mercy of God than we can read the secrets of the sinner's heart.

To human judgment, both alike are veiled.

There was an expression of curiosity, mingled with seriousness, upon the countenances of the magistrates when Humphrey Skillet was led into the justice-room in the Town Hall by the gaoler and turnkey, neither of whom had given him the slightest intimation of the baronet's death.

The murderer looked anxiously around the crowd as if he expected to see some one, and appeared disappointed at the result. At last, his eyes fell upon Collin Craw, and he shuddered visibly.

The first examination was touching the death of Miles Goring. The two Bow-street officers deposed to the finding of the body at West Lodge. Having given their evidence, Doctor Trevanion was the next witness called. Collin conducted the examination.

"You examined the body of the deceased, I believe?"

"I did."

"Will you state the result to the bench?"

"I discovered two wounds, both originally mere flesh ones, made with a sharp-pointed weapon; one on the side, which had not penetrated further than the third rib."

"Could that wound, in your opinion, have occasioned death?"

"Certainly not."

"And the second wound?"

"Was directly over the region of the heart," replied the doctor. "Originally it had not extended deeper than an inch and a half, but had been extended by the introduction of a knife, or sharp-cutting instrument."

"How far did it extend!"

"Through the pericardium to the heart, causing death."

"Would it have been possible to have inflicted such an injury with the first instrument or weapon?" added Collin.

"Most decidedly not."

As our readers are already in possession of the facts, it would be a waste of time to give more than a brief outline of the testimony adduced.

The Rev. Frederick Hansler next gave his evidence, relating the abduction of his pupil, whom he described as one of the bravest and most high-principled youths he had ever had under his care.

A murmur of intense interest broke from the auditory when the hero of the terrible drama enacted in their usually quiet neighborhood was called.

"Your name?" said Collin, in a tone that trembled slightly from emotion.

"I have hitherto been known as William Earl."

"Have you any reason to suppose or believe yourself entitled to any other?"

"Friends, dear friends, who have watched over me from infancy, inform me that I am the son of the late Captain Gaston."

At this announcement, a burst of applause broke from the crowd at the lower end of the room; the manifestation was instantly repressed.

"Relate the circumstances under which you became an inmate of West Lodge."

The voice of our hero never faltered during his narrative till he came to the death of his mother. Then tears choked his utterance, and he sobbed and wept bitterly.

"That part of his evidence," observed Sir Thomas Blake, the presiding magistrate, kindly, "will not be necessary till the second inquiry touching the murder of Hugh Gaston is gone into."

"Whilst a prisoner in the chamber you have described," resumed Collin, "had you any reason to believe your life in danger?"

"I had."

"State those reasons to the bench."

His ward did so: described the life-struggle between himself and Miles, at the same time baring his throat, where marks of the ruffian's grasp were still visible.

"And you struck him?"

"In self-defence," exclaimed the youth; "only in self-defence."

"With what?"

The instrument was produced, and the manner it had come into his possession explained.

The last witness touching the death of Goring was the locksmith, who had long been an object of curiosity and superstitious dread to the inhabitants of Wicksal. His conduct in arming William, for so, we shall still designate the heir of Moultree, had somewhat lessened the unfavorable feelings with which they regarded him.

He, too, had a tale of thrilling interest to tell, of suffering and torture.

"You confess to have placed this weapon in the hands of the young gentleman whose evidence we have just heard.

"I do."

"With what motive?"

"That he might defend his life."

"Against whom?"

"The prisoner and Goring," replied the cripple; "between them they murdered his mother. I have heard them accuse each other of the crime a hundred times."

At this there was a general cry of execration from the spectators.

Whilst the locksmith was describing the death of Miles, Humphrey Skillet several times interrupted him, by declaring that he had sworn falsely, through malice and revenge.

"You had better reserve your observations," said Major Strangways, "till his evidence is completed."

"I am not fairly dealt with," exclaimed the prisoner; "Sir Barnard Gaston knows that I had no hand in Goring's death. I suppose, gentlemen, you will believe him instead of that half-witted fool.

"I insist on Sir Barnard being called," he added.

"Unfortunately," replied the presiding magistrate, "supposing his testimony could be of any service to you, it is impossible to comply with your demand."

"Why so, Sir Thomas?"

"Sir Barnard expired a few hours since."

At this intelligence, the head of the master of Wicksal poor-house sank upon his breast; his last hope had vanished.

After a brief consultation, Humphrey Skillet was committed to the county gaol to take his trial for murder.

The investigation of the death of Hugh terminated in a similar result, the wretched man being a second time committed on the same capital charge. So great was the feeling of indignation against him that, in addition to the officers, it required the presence of Squire Beachum and Dr. Trevanion to secure him from the fury of the mob.

The witnesses were bound over to appear, and the magistrates separated.

As for Beckford, who at first had been suspected of a guilty participation in the abduction of William, the charge, after a brief examination, was dismissed. His correspondence with Sir Barnard Gaston proved that he had merely acted as his agent in procuring a ship to convey the imprisoned youth from England.

"Well," said Squire Beachum, when his friends were once more assembled beneath his hospitable roof, "Providence works all things for the best. The rights of the heir of Moultree will scarcely be disputed now."

The Templar shook his head despondingly.

"I am right," continued the old gentleman, placing his hand upon his arm; "the only person who could dispute his title is yourself."

"To the baronetcy," replied Edward, "yes; but not to the estates. Rely upon it, they will be fought for by my cousin Laura and her mother."

"What claim can Lady Alicia possibly assert?" demanded Doctor Trevanion.

"That of guardianship to her grand-daughter," answered Collin Craw, musingly. "Everything will depend upon Sir Barnard's will. Probably you will have to commence a friendly suit against the executors."

"I!" exclaimed the Templar.

"To afford us an opportunity of opposing you on behalf of Sir Egbert Gaston."

On hearing himself alluded to, for the first time, by his title, our hero burst into tears, and murmured the name of "Hugh."

"You forget, my dear boy," said the lawyer, kindly, "that it never could have been his. You must have claimed it, had he lived.

"You owe it," he added, impressively, "to the memory of your mother."

At this appeal to the dead his ward sighed. A new train of thoughts had seized him, and he remained silent.

With all his acuteness, the speaker committed an oversight in not at once entering into an arrangement and explanation with the locksmith, touching the restoration of the long missing casket, which he felt assured contained the key to the mystery. Had the baronet been living, in all probability he would not have lost an instant in doing so; but Sir Barnard dead, he believed events would take their course, little imagining that in Lady Alicia the guilty man had left an evil influence even more active and capable than himself in controlling them.

Circumstances connected with his own birth, too, had agitated and clouded his usually clear judgment. The doctor had succeeded, by chemical means, in reviving the faded letters marked upon the handkerchief and shirt.

In both instances they were the same—R. G.

The Templar heard the result without remark, or expressing by his looks the slightest surprise. To have judged from his countenance, one would have said that he anticipated it, and yet, had he been questioned, he could have given no reason beyond a vague and dreamy impression, arising from something he had seen or heard, but lost the clue to.

Collin's only hope, after all, was in inducing Humphrey Skillet to confess—rather a desperate one, considering the active part he had taken in bringing him to justice.

Peg Manders had told all she knew.

"It is now time that we returned to Moultree Hall," said the ambitious woman, whose schemes had recoiled upon her own head, and those of her husband and son.

Lady Alicia received the intelligence of Sir Barnard's death with one of those violent, passionate bursts of sorrow, which speedily exhaust themselves. Fortunately for humanity, such outbreaks are rarely lasting, for, by a wise dispensation of Providence, ills beyond our strength to bear are either cast off, or the grave at once relieves us from the burden.

The first day of her widowhood saw her a prey to grief, remorse, and despair; the second found her sullen, cold, and collected, calm as the tempest's wing furled from exhausted violence—a mask of living bronze, impenetrable to human eyes, but keenly alive to her own interests beneath its sheltering falsehood.

Her first act was to search for her husband's will, which she eventually discovered in one of the cabinets, endorsed—

"To be opened only after my funeral."

To some wives it would have been a command sacred as their marriage vow, hallowed as their love; but neither self-respect nor tenderness for the memory of the dead proved sufficiently strong to restrain the widow from violating the last injunction of the man she had sworn at the altar to honor and obey.

Without one feeling of shame or remorse, she tore open the envelope, and eagerly perused the contents of the will.

They were brief. Bequeathing the estates first to Hugh, and failing him, to his sister, both the children were left to the guardianship of their mother, Mrs. Gaston.

Lady Alicia and her daughter were not even mentioned!

"Revengeful to the last!" muttered her ladyship, tossing the parchment indignantly from her. "Maude will not feel it; she is nobly wedded, and rich without his gifts, while I have only my miserable dower."

This certainly was not the disposition of his property the speaker expected. In the draft of the will she so dishonorably read in London, when she found her husband's keys, a very different distribution had been made.

The discovery of Lady Cheverly and Edward's protection of the orphan son of Bella, and the purchase of the house in Oxford street by the latter, probably induced the testator to alter it—a supposition confirmed by the date.

A few hours' reflection suggested to the disappointed widow that the testament, after all, might prove more favorable to her interests than she anticipated. The death of Hugh and his mother left her the legal guardian of her orphan grand-daughter—Lydia was only fourteen. Seven years must elapse ere she could emancipate herself from her influence, or interfere with the management of the property.

Lady Alicia felt that she was still mistress of Moultree.

From the various schemes he was engaged in, Sir Barnard never knew what emergencies might arrive, and kept a large sum of money constantly by him. Of this, as well as certain securities placed with the will, his widow unhesitatingly took possession, regarding them as an inadequate compensation for the scantiness of her dower. Her next step was to write to Laura and her husband, now Lord Raymond. His aunt had quite penetration enough to discover that beneath a silken exterior her nephew masked a spirit as subtle and determined as her own.

At the meeting of the family she felt the necessity of having some one to countenance, if not to advise and assist her, and although her ladyship had very little faith in human gratitude or the ties of blood, she placed unlimited confidence in those of interest.

In fact, they were the only ones she recognised.

With woman's tact she had contrived to reconcile herself to the offended housekeeper, and by affecting to consult her in her distress, converted an angry enemy into a friendly partizan.

Although discharged by the magistrate from all participation in the crimes committed at West Lodge, the agent of the baronet's many villanies, Beckford, still lingered in the neighborhood of Moultree. The fellow knew that the knowledge he possessed had a money value, the difficulty was how to put it into the market; besides, Sir Barnard might have left him a legacy—considerations which decided him not to leave the place till the contents of the will were known.

Meanwhile, the arrangements for the funeral were proceeding.

Two days before it was to take place, Laura and her husband arrived at the Hall. Lady Alicia had not seen them since their marriage, and great was her astonishment at the change time had wrought in the character of her daughter; it was something marvellous. She was no longer the self-willed, giddy, capricious creature, the slave of head-strong will, but meek, quiet, and submissive.

It must have been no easy task to have tamed a spirit such as hers; and the manœuvering widow observed as much to her son-in-law.

His lordship merely smiled.

"But how did you achieve the miracle?" demanded his aunt.

"The process was a very simple one," he replied; "women are easily governed, provided you go the right way about it!"

"Not all," said her ladyship.

"You forget, aunt, that you are a Raymond!"

"Still, you have not answered my question."

"Oh! the easiest thing in the world—bend or break. Laura yielded as soon as she clearly understood the doctrine; but we have something more important to talk about than her. We understand each other perfectly well by this time, and it is her own fault if she is not happy."

"You have played the tyrant, I fear," exclaimed Lady Alicia.

"Acted the husband, you mean," said the nephew. "Had poor Sir William done the same, his fate might have been a different one.

"How about the will?" he added.

"Everything is left to my grand-daughter."

A frown of disappointment ruffled the usually placid features of the peer at this announcement; money was an object to him, the accession of rank having brought with it but slight addition of fortune.

"You, at least, are provided for," he observed, somewhat sarcastically; for he doubted not but the testament had been framed under her influence.

"Not a shilling beyond my jointure," was the reply.

"And that is?"

"Twelve hundred a year."

"A pittance!" exclaimed Lord Raymond.

Her ladyship shrugged her shoulders, and tried to look resigned.

"In whose hands is the will?"

"*In mine.*"

The reply was followed by a silence which lasted several minutes—each read the other's thoughts, but hesitated to give utterance to their own.

Her ladyship was the first to break it.

"It would be useless," she observed. "Edward, whom I detest, comes in for the title, and, were the will *lost or destroyed*, I fear also for the estates."

"Impossible! Sir Barnard hated him."

The widow explained to him the contents of the draft of a former will, which she had read.

"Aunt," said Lord Raymond, "you are not acting ingenuously with me. In my way through London, I called upon Cheverly. Egbert left a son by his first marriage."

"Ridiculous!"

"Edward Gaston, Maude, and her husband are all convinced of it."

"*Let them prove it!*"

"Cheverly will be here to-morrow," added the peer.

Lady Alicia drew herself up as if collecting her powers for some imaginary struggle, and declared, in a tone of calm defiance, that she was prepared to meet him.

"You think yourself armed?"

"Against him, and all," answered the haughty woman, firmly, "who dispute the rights of my grand-daughter to the inheritance bequeathed her."

"In your letter to me," said Lord Raymond, speaking in his usual quiet tone, "you held out its being in your power to promote my interests."

"It is so still."

"Explain yourself more clearly; my skill in reading riddles is exhausted."

"How old is your eldest boy?" demanded his mother-in-law.

"Nearly twelve."

"And Lydia is fourteen. The disparity is not great between them, especially if he has inherited the precocious spirit of his father."

The hint was palpable; the prize it held out a tempting one, under any circumstances, to the needy peer, for, in addition to the Moultree estates, the orphan girl was the undoubted heiress of her mother's fortune.

Before the aunt and nephew separated, they perfectly understood each other, and had decided on their plan of action.

On the following morning Lord Cheverly arrived at Moultree, accompanied by his friend, Hector O'Moore, to attend the funeral of his father-in-law. This mark of respect was not the only object of his visit. Edward, Collin Craw, and the friends of our hero, relied upon his representations to induce the widowed Lady Gaston to acknowledge her grandson, who listened to his explanations in angry silence.

"I can comprehend your surprise," observed his lordship, "but not the vindictive feeling I read in your eyes."

"The tale has not astonished me," replied the haughty woman, "for I have heard whisperings of this ridiculous conspiracy, to palm the illegitimate son of Edward upon the world as the heir of Moultree. It is your lordship's credulity," she added, sarcastically, "that I cannot comprehend."

"Only see the youth," exclaimed her son-in-law.

"Never!"

"The confession of your son."

"A forgery!"

"The evidence of Beachum and Dr. Tranion."

"A delusion!"

"The law, then, must decide," replied the peer. "For the sake of the dead, I dread the scandal and *exposé* that will become inevitable. I shall not consider your decision final," he added. "Reflection may induce you to change it. Consult your friends."

"*I have consulted all whom I trust,*" was the cold rejoinder.

After such a reply, Lord Cheverly felt that it would be useless to urge her further.

"Faith, and it's just what I expected from her," said Hector O'Moore, when his friend related the circumstances to him, and its result. "The remnant's pluck to the back bone."

"The what?"

"The widow, my lord; remnant is a poetical name I invented for the poor bereaved creature. Moultree is a mighty dull place just now," he added; "and, if your lordship has no objection, I'd like to amuse myself."

"Amuse yourself!" repeated the peer.

"*By taking observations,*" added the Irishman, sarcastically—"*lunar ones.*"

"Take anything you please," replied the peer, who felt convinced that some project regarding Lady Alicia and the heir of Moultree was working in the brain of his clever secretary.

CHAPTER LX.

Of all who flock'd to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe;
There throbb'd not there one heart that pierc'd the pall.
BYRON.

It had been the custom, from time immemorial, for the head of the Gastons to be buried by torchlight—a distinction accorded to no other member of the family—and Lady Alicia decided that it should not be departed from in the present instance. This singularity, joined to the peculiar circumstances attending the death of the baronet, caused the approaching interment to be talked of far and near: more than usual curiosity was excited.

The burial of Hugh and his mother took place the day previously: Sir Egbert (for so we shall for the future designate our hero) insisted upon attending that.

"I care not for my grandmother's rejection of me," exclaimed the noble-hearted boy, "but Hugh was my brother in affection as well as blood. Who has so great a right to mourn for him as I have?"

To the great indignation of Sir Barnard's widow, and despite the remonstrance of Lord Raymond, who pronounced his presence an *inconvenance*, Lord Cheverly himself led the heir of Moultree by the hand, and joined the procession as it quitted the Hall.

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Lady Alicia, when informed of what she considered an outrage to her authority; "I am a woman, or they would not brave me thus. Where is your husband's firmness," she added, addressing her daughter, who was seated near the drawing-room window, "that he permits it?"

"Augustus does not want for firmness," observed his wife.

"Perhaps not with our sex," observed her mother, bitterly. "He, at least, has succeeded in crushing your spirit."

Lady Raymond gave a perceptible shudder.

"Tell me," added the speaker, "how has he achieved it?"

"I have no confidant," replied Laura, "where my husband is concerned."

"I admire your meekness," said her ladyship; "but, doubtless, you love him."

The look with which the remark was answered was so full of hatred and fear that the iron heart of her parent for an instant felt touched.

"Raymond does not ill use you?" she observed.

"I make no complaint."

"You are rich—independent of him," added the widow; "if any real cause of unhappiness exists, why not seek redress?"

"What redress?" demanded her daughter; "divorce? that he may marry a woman wealthier than myself? No, mother; I will endure anything rather than give my rival that triumph over me. *I wait my time.* I have done wrong in speaking of this," she added; "but you drew it from me. Do not betray me. It would only add to my unhappiness, and I am sufficiently punished for my folly and credulity already."

Had Lady Alicia been less occupied by her own affairs, she would have questioned her daughter further upon the subject. The match, in some sort, had been her own making; and, with all her partiality for her nephew, the manœuvring woman felt indignant that he should presume to treat a child of hers with unkindness or indifference. Once or twice during the day she sought to revert to it; but Laura, as if divining her intention, remained in the chamber of her orphan niece.

The gay, thoughtless, heartless woman had learnt a lesson from her own sorrows—they taught her to sympathize with those of others.

The following morning the body of Sir Barnard Gaston lay in state in the great hall at Moultree. Most of the inhabitants of Wicksal, as well as the tenants of the estate, thronged to see the splendid pageant, and, could the dead have heard their remarks, as they walked slowly round the bier, he might have realized the poet's verse, at least, as far as their opinions were concerned:

"Man, art thou great or vile? die, and thou shalt know!"

The oldest tenants pronounced him a bad landlord, and none did say, "God bless him!" Even the domestics, who had resided many years in the family, could only set their features to the conventional expression of sorrow. Those who witnessed the scene would have understood why the ancients *hired mourners*—a custom by no means peculiar to antiquity.

In Holland and in some parts of Germany the inhabitants do the same at the present day.

The weary pageant, at last, was over, and the crowd of spectators no longer admitted to contemplate the empty pomp, which began rapidly to disappear under the exertions of the undertakers and their men, who commenced the lugubrious preparations for the funeral.

It was scarcely dusk when they began their work, which had not proceeded far when a female, closely muffled, so as to render recognition difficult, crossed the hall, cast a hasty look upon the coffin as she passed, and disappeared into the park.

"A ghost!" exclaimed one of the mutes, laughingly.

"An evil one," replied a quiet, tall-looking man, whom his comrades pronounced a novice at the trade, and wondered why their master should have employed him.

The speaker walked towards one of the large bay windows, and gazed after her.

It was the widow of Sir Barnard, who had excited his curiosity.

So complete did Lady Alicia consider her disguise, that she never once looked back to ascertain whether any one followed her or not, but rapidly pursued her way till she reached one of the numerous lodges belonging to the keepers—then, for the first time, she paused, listened at the window, and tapped.

The door was opened by Beckford.

"Your ladyship may enter," he said, "the woman and her son are both absent to see——"

"Hush! no names," interrupted his visitor.

It was not till she had entered, and the door of the lodge was once more barred, that the widow raised the thick vail, which completely screened her face.

"Singular," she observed, "that the widow of Sir Barnard Gaston should be holding a meeting such as this on the night of her husband's funeral."

"He trusted me," replied the man.

"And feared you."

"He had no cause, despite his broken promises; he ever found me faithful."

"They were unintentionally broken," replied the ambitious woman. "It was not your patron's fault that his daughter deprived you of the agency of Penswick; even then, his influence procured you permission to retain your house and farm."

"He had other estates."

"True," said the lady; "and the agency of Moultree is worth more than the one you have lost."

"That is past hoping for," answered Beckford; "the new heir bears no great love to those his grandfather favored."

"*Her* grandfather you mean," observed the widow.

"How?"

"My grand-daughter is the heiress of Moultree, and I am her guardian. Restrain your impatience and wonder; hear me out, for, as you may imagine, I have not quitted the Hall on a night like this to listen to idle congratulations. I have a purpose in seeking you."

"You require my services?"

"Yes."

"I am grateful to you for your frankness," exclaimed Beckford. "Unlike most of your sex, your ladyship comes at once to the point. The nature of the service can be explained afterwards. I should like first to hear the recompense."

"The management of the estates under my control, during the minority of my grand-daughter." The bribe was a tempting one, and he to whom it was offered knew its value sufficiently to purchase him body and soul.

"And the pledge that you will keep your promise, when what you require shall have been done?" he asked.

"It shall be an ample one."

Beckford regarded her doubtfully.

"The power at any moment of *undoing* it," she added.

Briefly as possible the widow of his former employer explained to him the loss of the casket, the means by which it had been extracted from the strong room, the abduction of the locksmith, and the danger to be apprehended from his delivering it into the hands of her enemies.

"Should it ever be placed in yours, Lady Alicia," said her new confidant, impressively, "let me advise you not to attempt opening it, unless in my presence."

"Why not?" demanded the widow of Sir Barnard, suspiciously.

"It might cost you your life."

At this assertion a smile of incredulity passed over the features of his visitor.

"It is no idle warning," he continued. "I was with your late husband when he purchasad the casket of a Jew dealer in Florence. It had once belonged to the celebrated Bianca Capella, who rose from humble origin to sovereign rank, and——"

"I require no lessons in history," interrupted his hearer, impatiently.

"I must repeat, even at the risk of offending you," added the former speaker, "that, since the death of Sir Barnard, I am the only person living who can open it with safety.

"And now," added Beckford, "the service?"

"The man—this Andrews, who betrayed my confidence, basely penetrated into the Hall at night, entered the strong room, and stole the casket—must be placed beyond the power of injuring me."

"By death?"

"I am not so weak, nor, I trust, so criminal, as to tamper with life. Sir Barnard, for years, kept him sequestered from the world. Why should not his imprisonment be continued?"

"I understand you, Lady Alicia. I am to be his gaoler, and his person is to be the security for your promise."

"Exactly."

"I accept your offer. Where do you propose to confine him?"

"At Moultree."

"It will be searched."

"Let them search it," replied the temptress. "They must have cunning eyes to discover him where I can place him."

"In the strong room?"

"No."

"There must be no half confidence between us."

"Neither shall there be," answered the scheming woman. The instant you arrive with your prisoner, everything shall be explained; but it must be at night."

"This very night," repeated Beckford.

The eyes of the widow flashed with anticipated triumph. What further conversation took place between them regarded merely the details. Andrews was to be brought as privately as possible to the Hall, and Lady Alicia herself to admit them.

With this understanding they separated.

Great as were the crowds assembled to witness the funeral of Sir Barnard Gaston, the old church of Wicksal proved large enough to contain them all. Midnight interments, unless in the case of royalty, are events of rare occurrence in England, and the scene proved not only solemn but picturesque, carrying the spectators back to the middle ages. Viewed from the churchyard, it would have proved most striking, probably, to the painter or the poet's eye.

We know not whether it was this artistic perception which induced the locksmith to remain seated upon one of the tombs watching the light streaming through the gorgeously-colored windows, long after every other person had retired from the sacred edifice, or a feeling of a more earthly nature, for he was one of those beings whose repentance proceeds from *suffering*, not the heart. With his renewed liberty, the wish of independence, the hope of selling the secret he had so dishonestly acquired, returned.

His thoughts were no longer of atonement for his crime, but compensation for the sufferings and long imprisonment he had undergone.

"Mockery! mockery!" he muttered to himself. "How the fiends must laugh at the pomp and ceremony with which the noble dust of my persecutor is committed to the grave! Future generations will read the marble-sculptured lie, which says, 'Here rests an honest man.'

"Honest!" he repeated, sarcastically, "umph! Had he been born poor, the hand of justice would long since have crushed him; being rich, he evaded it. How much longer will the hypocritical pageant last?" he added.

Curious to satisfy himself upon the point, he quitted his seat, and dragged his crippled limbs towards one of the windows commanding a view of the interior of the church. By standing upon one of the numerous graves he was enabled to watch the service.

"Black!" he exclaimed. "The aisles, pulpit, and galleries hung with black. Hundreds of yards of good cloth wasted! Velvet upon the coffin, too; but the worms will find him for all that!"

Whilst indulging in these and similar observations, Beckford and a man who, from his dress, looked like a gamekeeper, stealthily crept towards the spot where he was standing.

"There he is," whispered the latter, pointing him out.

"Are you certain?"

"Can't be mistaken; there are not two like him."

Beckford took a cloak, which the speaker carried in his hand, and, springing upon the locksmith threw it over his head.

So sudden was the attack, the wretched man could only utter half-stifled cries.

"Silence!" said his captor.

The cries for assistance were continued.

The command for silence was repeated, accompanied this time by a blow.

"Quick," said the leader of the enterprise; "we must be off before the mourners quit the church."

"All right," replied the man assisting him.

"Is the dog-cart ready?"

"Just by the old elms."

It was not without difficulty and a repetition of blows that the speakers succeeded in conveying Andrews to the vehicle to which a powerful horse was harnessed. Having at last placed him in, they mounted by his side, and drove off in the direction of Moultree, where Lady Alicia was anxiously awaiting their arrival.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

A JILTED LOVER'S STORY.

When I was a young man, I was professor of languages in the Blank Institute. One of our lady teachers was an interesting young person, very intelligent and attractive. She and I made each other's acquaintance, and (I may as well admit it first as last,) we became very warmly attached.

The duties of Miss Hanson, for so I will call the young lady, had become very onerous, altogether too much so for her delicate frame; and I, pained too see one who was so dear to me, laboring beyond her strength, looked about to see if something better could not be obtained for her. Gladly would I at once have made her my wife, and thus have obviated the necessity of her earning her own support; but in the then state of my finances, such a thing was not to be thought of. And so, not being able to do as I would, I tried to do what I could; and success attended my efforts.

A wealthy gentleman of my acquaintance, who had several young children, wanting a first class governess for them, I eagerly proposed Miss Hanson, and her examination proving satisfactory, she was duly installed in her new situation. She found it to be easy, pleasant and profitable; and my mind being set at rest regarding her, I now turned my attention exclusively to the duties of my profession, resolved to postpone for a year or two, the pleasant duties of courtship. I judged that we would both be better fitted for the faithful discharge of our engagements, seeing each other but seldom, than we should otherwise be. To be sure, it would have pleased me well to have received frequent letters from my esteemed Clara; but as she expressed herself very much averse to letter writing, I would not require her to distress herself for my sake.

Several months after Miss Hanson entered upon her work as governess, the eldest son of her employer came home, a graduate from college. He admired Miss Hanson from the first moment that he beheld her, and it was not long before he made her aware of the fact. He was pressing in his suit, he was wealthy, he was present with her, and my lady love transferred her affections and her engagement to him. The employer, discovering what was taking place, was enraged at his son's folly and at the lady's presumption, as he termed it, and would listen to nothing but an utter abandonment of the engagement. He turned the young lady away and she proceeded to New York in search of another situation. She had entered into arrangements to teach for six months—I do not remember where—when her lover suddenly appeared before her, and insisted upon a private and *immediate* marriage.

She consented, and after the ceremony the bridegroom went his way and the bride hers, for the term of six months. At the expiration of that time they again met, and proceeded to the city of Detroit to reside.

All this time no spirit whispered in my ear of danger or trouble. Calmly I labored on, only now and then pausing to think contentedly of my Clara, and to feel renewed satisfaction that she was so well placed. But suddenly I heard of her conduct—of all except her marriage, and of course she was lost to me as much as though I had known her to be wedded. I could not overlook such deceit and heartlessness.

Five years rolled away, and on a wild, stormy night I arrived at Detroit. Feeling very much fatigued, I asked to be shown at once to my room in the hotel. Hardly had I been left alone when some one knocked on the door next to mine.

"Who's there?" said a woman's voice.

"Father," was the reply. "Mrs. Jenkins is below and wishes to see you. I told her that you were not very well and had retired; but she will take no denial."

"Then she must come up here, Pa; we can never dress again and go down to her."

"Let me see, what was Mrs. Jenkins' maiden name?" asked one of the voices in the next room, when the father had withdrawn.

Hitherto I had been sitting in contemplative mood before my fire, hearing because I could not help it, the partition being so very thin.

"Why! she was Clara Hanson—don't you know—she was our school-mate in Boston years ago."

You may judge that there was a very sudden and violent alteration in my state of mind. I started so that I hit my head against the corner of the mantel piece, and came near rolling into the fire.

In breathless expectation I awaited the coming of the visitor. She had really married Jenkins then—that was the name of my friend. Presently that well remembered step drew near. There was a noisy meeting, much laughter, many questions, many fervent expressions of affection, of delight at being once more together.

"But, come now, let us hear each other's adventures," said Clara; and when her friends had related theirs, she began to talk of hers.

Reader, can you imagine my feelings as I heard that woman tell what I have already told, and much more? I heard all as if in a dream, yet I knew that it was reality—as real as *anything* can be in this unreal world. Presently I rose, and stealing softly into the hall, laid just before the door of the room where Clara was, one of my cards, and in excited silence waited the result. It was what I had reckoned on. Mrs. Jenkins saw it instantly as she stepped from her friends' room. "Some one has dropped a note," I heard her say. I heard her move towards the light. Then she gave a little shriek, and rushed back to her friends.

"Oh! Mr. —— has been here. He must have seen me come in and followed me. What shall I do?"

"Who is Mr. ——? You did not mention him. Why do you fear him?" asked the friends.

"Oh, he was an old beau of mine," said Clara, "and I would not meet him for the world."

"Why, how many beaux did you have?" was the laughing inquiry.

"I had a great many, and I *was engaged to four other men when I married Mr. Jenkins.* Mr. —— was the *fourth* one."

Ever since that night in the Detroit Hotel I have been firmly established in the opinion that not the Jews alone were watched over by a *particular* providence.

VANISHED.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Red on the bough hung the roses of June,
Yet flushed with the kisses of May;
The silver-lipped waters were sweetly in tune
With the winds' and the birds' roundelay.

But sweeter than roses that crimsoned the bough
Was the blush of my darling to me;
The soft hair, like sunlight, that slept on her brow
Was bright as the foam of the sea.

The violets that lift the fair lids of the Spring,
When her white dream of Winter is o'er,
Are less pure than the eyes whose lost loveliness fling
Their enchantment around me no more.

And wild as the strain, when the wind of the west
Smites the passionate harp of the sea,
Was the full tide of rapture that heaved her white breast,
When the lute-strings were trembling for me!

But the lute-strings are broken—the song is unsung
And hushed is the passionate breast,
For o'er her young beauty is mournfully flung
The silence and sadness of *Rest!*

And oh! in my bosom forever there lingers
The ghost of unquiet and pain,
For there is no minstrel whose magical fingers
Shall waken those numbers again!

CROSSING THE CREEK.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE FRESHET.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

I went up from New Orleans to collect some heavy demands which our house had against a few of the Arkansas planters. It was early in March when I started; and I took this season for two reasons: First, we were anxious for settlements, as it had been whispered that one of our creditors, at least, was about to sell out and move to California; and, secondly, I wished, if possible, to avoid the spring freshets, which would be sure to come in a few weeks at the furthest. At Napoleon I had the good fortune to find one of our creditors, with whom I made an easy settlement. I then went up the Arkansas River, to Belleville, where I found another. From here I was obliged to go across the country towards Manchester. My intention had been to follow the river up as far as Little Rock, and then strike down from there upon the Archidelphia and Washington highway; but the meeting with the man at Napoleon had rendered it unnecessary for me to go to Little Rock; so I decided to take the shorter route, trusting that I should make my way without much trouble. I purchased a good, stout horse, and set out from Belleville, taking nearly a western course. The road was bad enough, being wholly unfit for wagons· but I found no great trouble on the first day.

On the second day the weather was very warm, and towards the middle of the afternoon it began to rain; it did not rain hard, however, and I kept on, reaching a hamlet of some half-dozen dwelling-houses before dark, where I found accommodations for the night. Between that time and morning it rained considerable, as I could hear the heavy drops patter upon the thatching above me. The sun did not rise clear, but as the day broke it had ceased raining, and I determined to set forth on my journey. When I told my host which way I was bound, he shook his head, and told me that I might find trouble before I got through. I replied that I should go on until I did find it; all of which, he said, I had a perfect right to do.

At noon I reached a hut, where a rough specimen of humanity, named Binks, kept a store, a post-office, and a tavern. I saw no other dwellings, but supposed there must be some not far off. Here I got dinner, and had my horse fed. It had been lowery all the forenoon, with some slight attempts at rain, but not enough to wet me. As I called for my horse, after dinner, Binks asked me how far I was going. I answered him by asking another question. I asked if he knew how far it was to Col. Mortier's.

"Yes," he replied. "Mortier lives just beyond Big Indian Creek. Ye aint a goin' thar, be yer?"

I told him I was.

"'Taint safe, stranger," he added. "The colonel's place is a good twenty mile away, right over the lowest of bottom land."

"But why isn't it safe?"

"Why?" he repeated, seeming to wonder at my question. "I'll tell ye why, stranger. It's been a rainin'; and it's been warm; and I'm rather of the mind that the snow's been a meltin' an' runnin' on the mountains and bluffs. Ye see we don't catch it here right off; but when it does come it comes with a rush. If you don't find water enough afore ye get to Colonel Mortier's, then my name aint Tom Binks, that's all."

There was some reason in what the fellow said, but still I did not apprehend the danger which he pictured; and I resolved to keep on. He told me that I would find but one more house before I came to Mortier's.

"And," he added, "it'll be a lonesome road arter ye leave that. The path's plain enough, if ye can only keep it above water; but the trees are big and plenty on the low bottom, and I'm afeared ye'll find it dark enough afore ye come to the creek. Howsumever, once over the Big Indian, and ye'll be safe enough; for the colonel's house is on a bluff, an' out o' the way o' danger."

I thanked the man for his information, and then set forth. In an hour I came to the house which had been mentioned, where I found an old woman alone at home, the men having gone off with their guns. I got a drink of water for myself and horse, and pushed on. Half an hour afterwards the rain began to fall in good earnest; and by and by I came to a small stream which, from the appearance of the banks, and the color of the water, I knew must be considerably swollen. However, I forded it without difficulty, and kept on. The land was now lower, and the trees, as Binks had said, grew thick and large. It was a low, dismal forest, and the great rain-drops came down with a pattering anything but comfortable or musical. Still, the path was plain, and I urged my horse forward. I had noticed that the wind and the rain had come sweeping down from the northward and westward, and I wondered what might be the result if the snows had broken loose away off among the peaks of the Massernes. But, never mind—if I was lucky, two hours would bring me out upon the bluff beyond the Big Indian, and I should then be safe enough.

In half an hour more I came to another stream, which I found much swollen; but my horse forded it without difficulty. The rain now fell in torrents, and the water lay in great pools along the hoof-beaten track; and in a little while I found several small streams washing across my way which had no particular bed. They must, I knew, be streams of very recent formation; but I did not then see their full significance. On I went, the water increasing in my path, and the new-made streams occurring more frequently. I began to wish that I had listened to Tom Binks; for it was very dark and dismal in the deep woods, and the storm was on the increase. But the colonel's place could not be over an hour away, at the outside; and, perhaps, not over half an hour, for I could not well judge how fast I had travelled.

Ere long the sound of rushing water broke upon my ear, and soon I came to a point where a broad sheet was washing across the road; but I could tell by the trunks of the trees that it was not deep, and I waded my horse through it. Shortly after this I met two men on horseback, and learned that they belonged at the hut where I had last stopped. I asked them how far it was to Col. Mortier's.

"It's only a couple of miles away; but ye aint a goin' thar to-night, stranger," replied one of them.

"Yes," I told him. "If it's only two miles off I'll soon reach it."

"It can't be did, I tell ye. The creek's riz, an' the logs an' trees are sweepin' down awful. The biggest hoss that was ever made couldn't cross that creek now. We've been thar, stranger, an' we know. Turn back with us."

But I was not to be turned back so easily; and I told them that I should push on and run the risk.

"We can't stop to argufy," returned the one who had spoken before, "for thar's a heap o' danger afore us; but you're a fool, stranger, if you keep on. Mind what I tell ye!" And with this he rode on to overtake his companion, who had been jogging along.

For a few moments I hesitated; but I was too near the end of my journey. Only two miles. No, no—I would not turn back yet. I would go as far as the creek, and see for myself. If it could not be crossed, I could return then, and make the best of my way back.

So on I went, and ere long the sound of rushing water struck my ear. In a little while I came to the margin of a turbid, swelling stream, which came sweeping down from the gloom of the deep forest. I wondered if my horse could breast the current. It was not wide—not so formidable as I had expected to find it from what I had heard of the creek. While I was reflecting upon the matter I cast my eyes up and saw, at no great distance above me, a place where several large trees and logs had become jammed in a narrow part of the channel, forming a complete bridge across the stream. If I could reach that point, I could walk across, and guide my horse by the rein while he swam. As I moved along towards it I glanced over my left shoulder and saw, in a distance made dim by the driving storm, a high bluff, with buildings upon it. It could not have been over a mile away, and was, of course, the habitation of the man whom I sought. I took courage, and pushed on. When I reached the jam I at once dismounted, and having slipped the rein from my horse's neck, I grasped it firmly in my hand, and stepped out upon the logs. At first the horse refused to follow, but finally he plunged in, and, as he was under the wake of the jam, he swam without much difficulty. The rushing water bore heavily upon the frail bridge, and swayed it to and fro with fearful power, while the white foam dashed over it the whole length. I had reached the middle, trying every step before I made it, when I thought I felt the fabric giving way beneath me. Another step, and the surging and creaking of the logs told me that they were going. On the next moment the part behind me went with a crash. A huge log struck my horse in the breast, and swept him away. I could not hold him—I could only look out for myself. With a bounding step I leaped forth, reaching the shore just as the last log of the jam went tearing away. I looked for my horse, but I could not distinguish him amid the mass that bore him down. The poor beast was gone, and I was left alone to battle my way. I murmured a regret at the loss—it may have been a prayer for the noble animal—and then turned my face to the westward. In a few moments I saw the bluff again, through a vista in the trees, and the outlines of the house were marked against the murky sky; but it was not so plain as before. It was not so light as it had been. Night was coming on apace.

I said, when I escaped from the logs, that I reached the shore. Ah, but it was a treacherous, sunken shore. The water was almost knee-deep among the great trees, and moving down with much force; so that every step had to be taken with the utmost caution; and at times I was forced to catch at the drooping boughs to steady myself against the rush of water. But there was high and dry land ahead, for I had seen it. I heard a loud roar, which seemed to increase in volume as I advanced, but at first I did not pay much attention to it, as I thought that the stream behind me was rising. At length, however, a terrible truth began to break upon me. The roar not only increased in volume of tone, but I was assured that it came from the direction in which I was going! A little while longer, and I saw it all. A large stream was before me! I reached its margin and found it to be a broad, deep, dark river, plunging its mad flood along, bearing trees, and logs, and snags upon its foaming bosom! How sadly had I been mistaken! This was the Big Indian Creek, and the other was only a course which had been made by the freshet!

What was I now to do? What could I do? If I turned back I was surely lost, for the stream which I had once crossed could not be crossed again, even if I had had my horse. And the stream before me, what of that? Of all the horses in the world, not one could have breasted it and lived. The land all about me was submerged, and I stood in the midst of a wide, rolling sea. O, how I then wished that I had taken the advice of Tom Binks! How I wished I had listened to the men whom I had last met. But it was too late now. Death seemed inevitable. The flood was rising every moment—higher and higher. It was now above my knees anywhere, and I could hardly stand against its impulse. But I would not die inactive. I would exert myself while life lasted. Which way should I turn? A natural instinct led me to oppose the current, so I moved against the stream.

The night was now close upon me, and in a little while it would be dark. I could see the bluff upon the opposite side, and the dwelling of my friend looming up against the fading sky. The water was growing deeper, and I had to struggle hard to move against its tide. What miracle was to save me? By and by I came to a point where a huge tree, close upon the bank of the creek, bent its great branches far over the stream, while upon the opposite side grew another tree, the meeting branches of both forming an arch, below which rolled the dark waters. When I saw this I saw my only hope. I reached the tree upon my side, and finally succeeded in climbing it. I went up as high as I thought necessary, and then worked my way out upon one of the longest limbs. I went out as far as I could, but the prospect was a dubious one. As the branch bent beneath my weight, I found that the connection of the arch was broken. The branches of the tree upon the opposite bank were not far off, but I could not reach them with my hand. The thought of leaping out over the dreadful tide gave my heart such a throb that for a few moments I was almost powerless. And yet, leap I must, if I would be saved. And, moreover, there was no time to lose, for the gloom was fast gathering upon objects about me, and shutting them from my vision. I was two-thirds of the way up the tree, and, as near as I could judge, some sixty feet above the water. I could make the leap, and I might catch some branch of the opposite tree. I placed my feet carefully, and made sure of my hold upon one of the boughs above me. Then I waited a moment to get breath, and to utter a prayer. Then, with all the nerve I could summon to my aid, I made the leap. I caught at a branch of the other tree—I grasped it with the energy of a dying man—and my hold was good. But my weight bent it down—bent it down, down—until I hung suspended so near to the boiling, hissing flood, that one huge log grazed my feet as it went sweeping down. In the startling agony of the moment I cried aloud to God to save me!

With my death-gripe upon that limb I grew calm again. It did not break—it only bent. I summoned my strength back to me, and pulled myself up with my hands. Higher—higher—until I could use my feet. I gained the body of the tree; and then, when I had again taken breath, I lowered myself to the ground. A few steps brought me to land which the surging waters did not reach; and in a little while longer I had dragged my way up the bluff to the door of the dwelling. I remember that the servants picked me up; and that Col. Mortier came and called me by name.

In the morning I had so far recovered that I was able to arise and dress; and when I told to my host the story of my adventure, he could hardly credit it. When I looked in the mirror I saw the reflection of a pale, haggard face, looking a score of years older than the face with which I had set out from Belleville. When I gazed out upon the way by which I had come the night before, I saw a wildly rushing stream, tearing up great trees in its mad frenzy, while beyond lay a forest seeming to grow up from the bosom of a great sea. The waters covered the bottom land as with a deluge, and the work of destruction was fairly commenced. I saw it all; and, as I shuddered again at the sight, I firmly resolved that I would never undertake another journey across the bottom lands of Arkansas, anywhere near the season of the spring freshets.

COMPULSORY SHOPPING.

Raise your eyebrows if you like, but there *is* such a thing; not for the knowing ones of course, who steer clear of shops where one is not a free agent; who have no time to look at goods they don't want, and select certain stores for their purchases where they are sure of civil treatment, and are free to buy or not to buy. Reader, have you never accidentally stumbled into the description of store alluded to? Let me describe it to you. Enter the door, and three clerks immediately leap from the scabbard and ask—"what is it?" Of course, you immediately forget any intentions you might have had of buying anything, and before you have time to recal your senses, you find yourself listening to a running inventory of everything in that shop, with the prices, from a cotton handkerchief to a silk velvet cloak or dress. If you are not a lunatic by that time, you make a feeble attempt to get out into the open air; which praiseworthy effort is frustrated by a procession of clerks who accompany you down the store, each with a piece of goods over one arm, which they pat and stroke with caressing fingers, and would be happy to know "if it is eleven or twelve yards you will need for your dress." Speechless with astonishment, and innocent of any "dress" intentions, you hold on to the counter, and stagger along till the door is reached, where the sight of free and happy human beings on the sidewalk gives you courage, and with one bound, you defiantly cross the threshold, and stopping only long enough to note the number and read the sign over this woman-trap, you keep as near a policeman as possible, nor feel safe till you are quite lost in the crowd, and under your own protecting roof, where you register a vow in the familiy archives, never to go near *that* shop again.

FANNY FERN.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Schoolboy wants to know why he can safely skate over ice, when he is going as fast as he can, which would break under him, if he should stand still on it, or even go over it slowly. That is a very good question for "A Schoolboy" to ask, and it indicates that he is an observing lad, and has that kind of mind which *will* get at the reason of things. The reason of the phenomenon referred to may be found in the fact that time is required for producing a fracture of the ice. It does not break at once; it first *begins to bend* under your weight, and does not break until it reaches that point (or *stretch*) at which it can *bend* no further. When you glide swiftly over it, you do not remain long enough on any part of the ice to enable it to bend to the breaking point; but the moment you stop it begins to sink and bend beneath you, and soon breaks. When ice is *very thin*, or *very spongy*, your skate iron will *cut* through it, there not being fibre or toughness enough in it to give it even that tenacity which is necessary to occasion it to *bend* under your weight.

Detroit.—The "comic epitaph" written by Dr. Franklin, we did not give in the paragraph to which you refer, because we supposed everybody knew it. Here it is, however:

The Body
of
Benjamin Franklin,
Printer,
Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding,
Lies here, food for worms.
But the work shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more
In a new and elegant edition,
Revised and corrected
by
The Author.

This epitaph was probably written when Franklin was a printer's apprentice in Boston. This is not certain, as the epitaph was originally printed without date; but various circumstances indicate that it was a sportive production of Franklin's youth.

H. K.—The speed of the elephant has never been ascertained with such accuracy as that of the horse has been measured. Some close calculations have been made, however; and it is stated that an elephant can travel at the rate of ten miles an hour for several hours in succession, under favorable circumstances. It is also known that an elephant, when fully aroused, can run with great swiftness for a short distance, say a mile or two, but how swiftly—that is, whether he can run a mile in two, or three, or four minutes, or in any other definite and ascertained space of time—has never been accurately determined.

Young Writer.—It is a sensible conclusion that you have come to, not to use foreign words and phrases in your compositions. As a general thing, it shows bad taste and an unripe judgment for an author to make use of "foreign quotations;" and it is usually only weak writers who spice their native slip-slop with words and phrases from other languages. Sometimes, however, learned men, who wish to give the thoughts of some old author, quote his own language, whatever it may be, because they cannot do him justice by a translation.

Ada is very much troubled because some evil-minded persons assert that her half-sister, who is happy at home, made a visit away from home because she was not well treated. "Shall I take the trouble to correct the report?" asks Ada. No; nor should you let it annoy you. There are those who will always try in some such way to make mischief in families. Go quietly on loving your half-sister, and take no notice of the mischief mongers.

D. J.—"Some persons unknown to me," writes D. J., "have injured my reputation with the mother of a young lady whom I visit. This is a source of great distress to me and the girl. What shall I do?" Bring the mother undeniable proofs to the contrary, if you are innocent; we know no better way to overcome the evil that has been done.

Decatur.—It is said that the word Yankee arose from the attempt of the Indians to pronounce the French word Anglais (English). Yankee was the nearest they could come to it, and this word, first used in sport by the early settlers, became at length the popular name of the inhabitants of New England. Whether or not this is the correct origin of the term, it is impossible to say.

L. L. L.—The word mechanic is derived from a Greek word which signifies a machine, and the original meaning of the word, therefore, is machine-maker. But the name is now applied to most skilled workmen.

F. E.—It is impossible for any one to tell you "what is the best education," short of an octavo volume of many hundred pages. Education is divided into many branches, such as mental education, moral education, physical education, &c., &c.: and these are further subdivided into many other branches. To what extent each of these should be pursued, and what should be the relative importance assigned to each, has never yet been practically determined. Nor has it yet been settled whether the *knowledge acquired* by any given course of study, or the *mental discipline* which that course imparts, is of the most consequence. Then come the questions, What knowledge is of most value? What course imparts the best discipline? What system of government is best? On what principle shall reward and punishment be meted out? and "many others too numerous to mention." The whole thing might be summed up by saying that *that education is best which enables one to live the noblest and most useful life*; but then the question would be, What *is* the noblest and most useful life? And thus the subject expands before us, until it widens and deepens beyond the grasp of any but the Omniscient mind. It will do you no harm, however, but much good, to study this vast subject with whatever ability and force you can bring to its consideration.

A Mother writes to us that it has become a practice for some young man to visit, not once or twice a week, but *constantly*, some young lady, singling her out from the rest of the family by the marked attentions common only to lovers, and by this course keeping other young men at a distance. "After a while he suddenly leaves her for some new attraction, feeling quite at liberty to do so, as he has never *said* a word about matrimony. What do you think of such conduct?" We denounce it as selfish, heartless, and unworthy of any one bearing the name of a gentleman. But the young ladies should take this matter into their own hands; they should not allow any *one* young man to escort them often in public, or otherwise attract attention by his devotion, until he has regularly asked permission as a lover to do so. They can easily put a stop to the contemptible practice complained of, by accepting the attentions of other gentlemen. If a young man wishes the exclusive privilege of waiting on any young lady, let him ask for it in a manly way, or not expect it.

Philip.—The little modern city of Satalge, in Thessaly, occupies the site of the ancient and famous town of Pharsalia, where Cæsar and Pompey contended for the mastery of the world, some two thousand years ago. This noted battle was fought B. C. 48. Pompey had about double the force that Cæsar commanded, the former having about 52,000, and the latter only some 21,000 men. But Cæsar, like Napoleon, was a host in himself, and won the battle by his superior military knowledge and skill, and the energy and celerity of his manœuvres. Pompey was evidently afraid of his great rival before the battle commenced; and when he saw the movement on which he most relied for victory suddenly turned to his disadvantage by a masterly and unlooked-for development of Cæsar's forces at the contested point, his surprise and mortification seemed to unsettle his mind, and he sank almost into imbecility. Cæsar lost only 200 men, while of Pompey's army 15,000 were slain and 24,000 taken prisoners.

History.—Your "foreign teacher" must be little better than a heathen, to maintain that Sisera was a Numidian general and contemporary with Hannibal. Sisera was the commander of the forces of "Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor," who "had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." He was defeated by the Hebrew captain Barak, B. C. 1336; and in fleeing, on foot and alone, he was enticed into her tent by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who killed him by driving a nail into his brain as he slept. "Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was asleep and weary. And so he died." See the fourth chapter of Judges, for a full account of Sisera's defeat and death.

Erastus wants to know, in case a young man escorts a lady to places of amusement separate from the rest of her family, and keeps company with her in that way for several months, and then leaves the place and writes to her as one of his best friends, if she has a right to expect anything more than feelings of friendship from him. If she did, she would not probably make it known to you, Erastus, who appears to us to be one of that numerous class of young men at the present day, who go just as far as possible in love-making, without committing themselves by any promise. It is a despicable practice, and young girls would do well to reform it by not "keeping company" exclusively with any young man who is not an affianced lover.

Professor.—There is as much difference between knowledge and intelligence as there is between steel and iron ore, or between a silken fabric and a cocoon. Intelligence is merely raw material; knowledge is the finished product obtained by putting intelligence through the mental, moral and spiritual machinery. In these processes our own native and inherent powers impart new qualities to the raw material operated on, as well as refine it of its own impurities, and thereby render the product —knowledge—a part of our mental condition and an inalienable possession. Intelligence, on the contrary, we merely hold by our memory: it may be forgotten, and it may be proved to be false and worthless.

Oldfield.—We think that we published the singular epitaph to which you refer, in the Ledger some three or four years ago, but it is well worth "laying before the public" again. It was copied literally from a tombstone in Scotland, and is as follows.

Here lies the body of Alexander Macpherson,
Who was a very extraordinary person;
He was two yards nigh in his stocking feet,
And kept his accoutrements clean and neat.
He was slew
At the battle of Waterloo
Plumb through
The gullet; it went in his throat
And came out at the back of his coat.

A Young Lady says that a young gentleman has kept company with her for three years as only lovers do, and has never yet spoken of marriage; that he keeps away by this course of proceeding other young men who would have paid attention to her, and she asks the usual question, "What shall I do?" You should show him, by going with other young men, that you do not consider your society his exclusive property; then, if he chooses to behave in a right and honorable manner, he will "declare himself;' and if he does not, so much the better, as you will then be well rid of him.

A Reader has a grievance. A young lady agreed to attend a concert with him; but on the evening of the concert, her father informed her that *he* had made an engagement for her to attend the theatre with another gentleman, which she did. "Ought she to have done so?" asks A Reader. We do not see how she could avoid it, if her father insisted that she should do so, after knowing the circumstances. In that case, however, she should have left a note or message for you, asking you to excuse her for what was unavoidable.

School-Girl.—This correspondent is very much mortified by the behavior of a young lady who goes to and from school with her, and who speaks to strange gentlemen, talks loudly, and pushes people on the sidewalk. When remonstrated with for such conduct, she tells our correspondent it is none of her business. The best way to treat such an immodest romp would be to refuse to walk with her at all, and to cut her acquaintance altogether.

N. L. contemplates visiting some relatives this winter, who, at their social parties, have plays in which a great deal of kissing goes on. N. L. dislikes this very much, but if she objects to it her friends take it as an insult, and she wants to know what she shall do. Refuse kindly but firmly to join in such plays. Your friends have no right to force them upon you. In such a case, it is *you* who are insulted, not *they*.

S. T.—No man can find a spring of water by the aid of any kind of divining rod. A belief of this kind was universally prevalent a hundred and fifty years ago, but until the receipt of your letter we supposed the opinion extinct. A person accustomed to dig wells acquires a knowledge of the signs of water by the use of his eyes, not by waving a forked stick.

A. L.—If the young man who stole the picture of a lady-friend from her house, when visiting her, will not return it, let her send some gentleman friend to compel him to restore it to her or take the consequences. If she has no friend, she could apply to a magistrate to send a policeman, as he would after any thief.

Three Deserted Maidens.—We do not think it "best," even when there is no objection to the gentlemen, that school-girls should receive their attentions. Time enough for that when your education is completed. It is impossible for you to study to advantage when your heads are filled with dreams of lovers.

Initial.—If your object is to "avoid hard work," going on the stage is the last way you should choose to get a living; not to speak of the myriad temptations which beset a young woman who enters on such a life. An actress has to work harder than many a servant girl.

James.—It would be a hazardous undertaking for a person fond of travel, and but with little more than enough money to cross the ocean, to go abroad. He might make his way, but the chances are that he would have to succumb to the disadvantages of his position.

Oregon.—Oregon is a young man of considerable fortune, richer than any other unmarried man in his neighborhood. Being also a presentable young gentleman, correct in his habits, of respectable connections, and fond of the society of ladies, he is much courted by mammas who have marriageable daughters, and even the daughters themselves, he thinks, exhibit a certain degree of interest in him. He loves a dowerless maid, one who, in point of social standing, is considered inferior to all the young ladies of the circle he most frequents. He has reason to believe that this young lady is well affected toward him; he is sure she will consent to be his, if he asks her. But a withering suspicion haunts him, and prevents his uttering the final question that makes or mars his happiness for life. Above all things, he desires to be loved for himself alone, and he shudders at the thought that it may be his wealth and social standing that render the girl so complaisant to him. He wishes to know how he can ascertain to a certainty whether it is himself or his money that she loves. Thus we reply: Men and women are so constituted as seldom to act, in an affair of importance, from a single motive. A perfect marriage is more than a union of hearts; it is the most complicated of all relations. It is love, friendship and partnership, all in one. A girl is not base to desire a good settlement, as well as a good husband, for it is unquestionable that a sufficiency of wealth conduces to the happiness, usefulness, and dignity of life. That woman is base who is willing to procure a comfortable and elegant home by selling herself to a man she does not love. What you have to discover is, whether the girl is a truly virtuous and honorable person, one whom *you* can truly and always love. Whether, along with her preference for you, there is some complacent dwelling upon the worldly advantages of a marriage with you, is a question of no importance. If she is a girl of the right stamp, it remains only for you to win her sincere affection by deserving it. The grand secret of being loved for your own sake, is, for you to be *loveable* for your own sake.

An Only Son tells the following story: "My father," he says, "was once the wealthiest man in the county in which we live, and he is still possessed of considerable property. But he is fast dissipating his substance. A few years since he became addicted to habits of intemperance, and since that evil time his property seems to have had wings. My mother and myself, and many influential friends, have done all we could to stay his ruinous course, but our efforts have been without effect. His personal property is now completely used up, and he is beginning to mortgage his real estate, which is very extensive, and so rapidly increasing in value that in a few years it would be worth a very large sum. What can be done by me or by my mother to protect ourselves against the ruin that is impending over us?" You can probably do nothing to prevent your father from squandering his share of the real estate; but your mother's right of dower must be valuable, and *that* cannot be taken from her except by her own act. She should not sign any mortgage or conveyance of any portion of the real estate, unless her share of the proceeds be first paid over to her personally, or secured to her in her own name and for her own benefit, and to you in case of her death.

Schoolboy.—The scene of Braddock's defeat is on the right bank of the Monongahela river, seven miles from Pittsburgh. The spot is still called Braddock's field, and is frequently visited by tourists, but whether any monument exists to mark the place we know not. Braddock was buried about forty miles from the battle-field, in the middle of the road by which his army had marched, so as to prevent his being found by the enemy. After his body was deposited in the earth, horses and wagons were driven over the spot on purpose to obliterate every trace of digging. The body was never removed. Fort du Quesne, which he was about to attack, was situated on the point of land formed by the junction of the Allegany and Monongahela, the site of the present city of Pittsburgh. Some remains of this famous old fort were visible as late as 1834. As a military position, Fort du Quesne was worthless, as it was commanded by lofty hills, from which it could be crushed by a cannonade. We presume it was for this reason that the fort was allowed to go to decay. The site of the fort is now covered with houses and stores, and the shores of the point form the levee of Pittsburgh, at which lie scores of Ohio steamboats.

Senex.—The origin of the term Brother Jonathan, as a name for the American people, is thus stated by an old historian, the late venerable John F. Watson, of Pennsylvania: In the early days of the revolution, Gen. Washington was accustomed often to consult his attached friend, Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut. Whenever a matter of importance was considered, the general was wont to say, "We must consult brother Jonathan first;" and this expression became a byword among the officers of Gen. Washington's family, and afterwards, in the army generally. Now, brother Jonathan was a man of the people, possessing common sense, energy, and patriotism, and if he approved the measure proposed, it was pretty sure to please the people. Thus, consulting brother Jonathan was regarded as equivalent to taking the sense of the people, and hence, in the course of time, the term acquired its present signification. This is the best explanation we can discover of the origin of the expression. If you find a better, let us know it.

D. L.—It would not be pursuing a proper course for you to "watch your opportunity, catch your neighbor's boy, and flog him as severely as he beat your own son." Should you commit such an outrage you could be indicted, and probably would be sent to prison for the offence; furthermore, your neighbor might, in his rage at such an assault upon his son, shoot you, or at least resort to some other savage mode of revenge. Your best course would be to inform your neighbor of the conduct of his son, and leave the punishment to him. You, at any rate, have no right to lay *your* finger upon any boy except your own.

Elder.—The dying of the three presidents, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe, on the Fourth of July, is only one among several remarkable coincidences in our history. John Adams, who died in his 91st year, was eight years older than Jefferson, his successor in the presidency. Jefferson was eight years older than Madison; Madison was eight years older than Monroe; Monroe was eight years older than John Quincy Adams. Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe all left the presidential chair in the sixty-sixth year of their age.

Ida May.—If you wish to address a letter to a European sovereign, there is probably no better way than to send it through the post-office, as you would any other letter. Your epistle may never get to the hands of Queen Victoria, but it will reach some one who is authorized to examine letters addressed to the sovereign, and ascertain whether it contains anything worthy of her attention. Direct your letter thus: "To her Majesty, Queen Victoria, England."

M. C. J. asks, "Would it be proper for a young lady, who is boarding away from home, occasionally to receive a call from a gentleman of her acquaintance?" That is a question for your parents to decide, after they learn who the young gentleman is, and what he is. Every such case should be decided on specific and personal grounds, by the parties who are entitled to control the young lady's actions.

Mills.—Is a lady justifiable in proposing matrimony under any circumstances, and if she is, what must the circumstances be? We can imagine no circumstances which would justify a lady in offering herself in marriage. Any woman who should get a husband by such a violation of her instincts, would bitterly regret it as long as she lived.

C. M.—If your wife "*cannot* sing in a choir where she is compelled to sit on the same seat with a person she abhors," and if such an abhorrent person infests the seat whenever she sits in the choir where she *now* sings, we see no way except for her to stop singing in that choir.

H. G. T.—It may not be absolutely "improper" for a young lady to visit at the house of a neighbor when one of said neighbor's sons is waiting upon her; but it would be more delicate for her not to go except on rare occasions, and then in company with some other person.

W. J.—There are, of course, different opinions as to what kind of ring is most proper for a wedding-ring. A plain gold one, as massive and of as fine quality as the purse of the bridegroom will allow, is always in good taste.

G. W. S.—The lady who, on the occasion of your offering yourself to her, a short time since, "turned the conversation to some other subject," might have thought that you were not in earnest. Try again, and be explicit in word and manner.

May Bell.—Where there is no servant in the family, it is the duty of the husband to make the fire in the morning, particularly if there are young children to be looked after by the mother.

C. A. H.—It *is* possible for one person *truly* to love another and fail to draw back love in return. The world contains many disappointed hearts from this cause.

Estelle.—The phrase, "A sadder and a wiser man," occurs in Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

W. R. C.—An invalid has no right to marry. There are widows enough and sickly children enough in the world already.

**** Several letters stand over to be answered in our next*